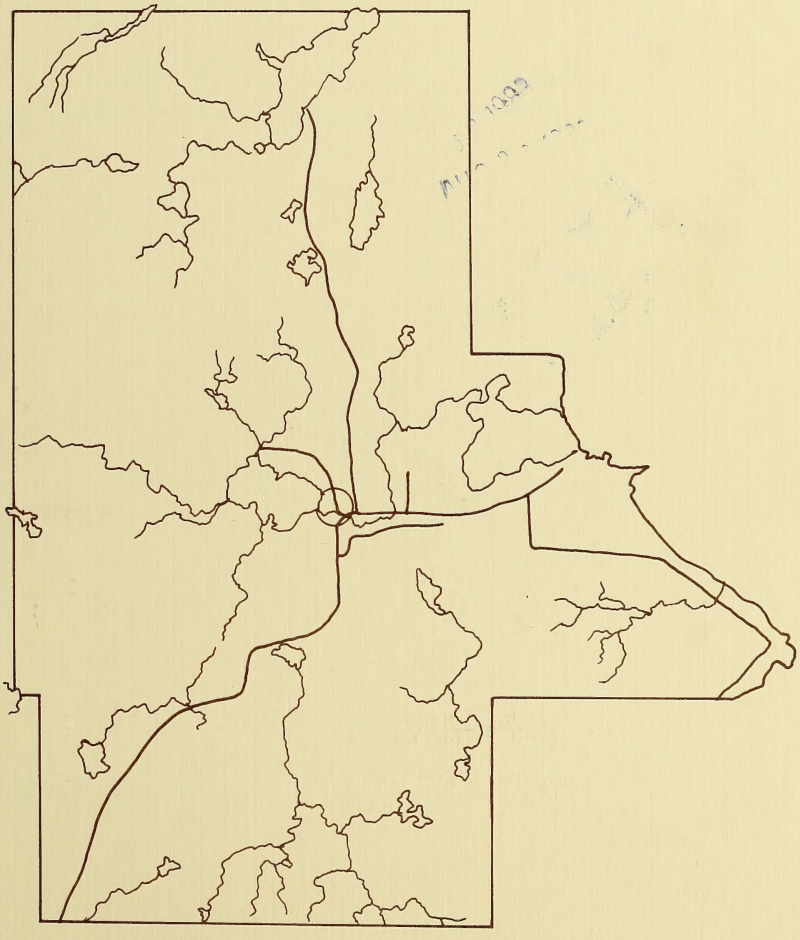
GIFT LAKE
METIS SETTLEMENT



LAND USE PLANNING INVENTORY

MAP BOUNDARY CORRECTION: The east boundary of Gift Lake Metis Settlement in the area north of Utikumasis (Little Whitefish) Lake is located on the east side of SEC. 8 and SEC. 17 - TP. 80 - RG. 11.

GIFT LAKE METIS SETTLEMENT
LAND USE PLANNING INVENTORY

by
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Alberta
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Municipal Planning Section
Planning Branch
Alberta Municipal Affairs
March, 1982

Acknowledgements

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Elmer Ghostkeeper, Federation of Metis Settlement Associations, initiated the request for the inventory on behalf of the Settlement Council. Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council members (present and past) and staff including Chairman Charlie L'Hirondelle, Larry L'Hirondelle, Raymond Cunningham, Floyd Anderson, George A. Anderson Jr., St. Germain Courtorielle, Sullivan Gladue, Olga Cunningham, William Shaw, and Donna Anderson provided most of the information on land use, housing, and development. The data were collected during 1981. Much of it had not previously been mapped or inventoried.

The many individuals from other government departments and agencies who provided detailed input and reviewed the initial draft are listed in reference section at the back of report.

Ann McIntosh prepared the report tables and illustrations. The maps were drawn by the drafting staff in Planning Support Services. Lori Carlson and Paula Taylor typed the report.

Al McCully
Hugh Seaton

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1.0 Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inventory and analyze the major physical and cultural resources of Gift Lake Metis Settlement. Prepared by the Municipal Planning Section for the Metis Development Branch and Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council, the report is intended to be used as an information base. It represents the first phase in the planning process and provides a departure point for future land use and development planning. It is expected that the inventory will be utilized by the Federation of Metis Settlement Associations, Settlement residents, government agencies, adjacent municipalities, and the private sector in making decisions related to the Settlement.

Gift Lake Metis Settlement is located 40 km (25 mi) north of Lesser Slave Lake and covers a land area of 839 sq.km (324 sq.mi). It has a population of 604 (1981). Of the approximately 120 houses (including mobile homes), 84 are situated in the hamlet and 36 in the rural area. The hamlet is the Settlement focal point, as 70% of the residences and most of the community facilities and services are located there.

The development pattern at Gift Lake Metis Settlement has traditionally been based in primary resource activities: fishing, logging, hunting, trapping, farming, and oil and gas exploration. The culture and lifestyle of the Settlement is closely linked with the environment. Many families still obtain a significant portion of their food from the land through fishing, hunting, gardening and picking berries. Because of the lack of fulltime employment opportunities, many families have small incomes. However, by combining seasonal employment (logging, oil and gas work, fire fighting) with other activities such as farming, trapping or fishing, most families are able to make a good living. Settlers tend to place a stronger emphasis on family unity and daily living than on money and material possessions.

The remainder of the summary highlights the existing situation and development potential of the Settlement. It also makes recommendation which if implemented could help realize the development potential.

1.1 Oil and Gas

While considerable oil exploration has occurred, there is currently one producing well and 26 abandoned or capped wells.

1.2 Sand and Gravel

Preliminary analysis reveals few good prospects for commercial scale gravel deposits. Alberta Transportation has used a few small sites along Secondary Highway # 750, but most gravel is hauled in from High Prairie.

- A gravel inventory should be undertaken to locate a supply on the Settlement.

1.3 Peat Moss

Preliminary surveys indicate extensive peat moss reserves exist.

- The commercial and industrial potential of the peat moss reserves should be evaluated.

1.4 Domestic Water Resources and Supply

No deep wells exist because the groundwater is contaminated with sulphate deposits. Residents obtain drinking water from the reservoir in the hamlet. Water is drawn from Gift Lake, treated and stored in the reservoir before being pumped to three water stand points, the school, teacherages, community hall, skating rink, and Settlement Office via a water line. The design capacity of the water treatment plant is 113,560 litres (30,000 gal.) per day.

- Short term suggestions for improvements to water supply include:

  (i) redesigning and maintaining the water stand points;
  (ii) providing a water truck delivery service; and
  (iii) construction of cisterns adjacent to residences.

- Because the hamlet housing is fairly concentrated (over 70% of the Settlement residents live in the hamlet), a long term solution to water supply would be to install a communal water distribution and sewage collection system.

1.5 Agricultural Development

Farming is currently not a major land use or economic activity on Gift Lake. Although there is only one active farmer, several other settlers are interested in farming. Farming activities are characterized by cow/calf operations, but no feed grain was grown in 1981. There are about 83 ha (205 ac) of land under production in tame hay and pasture. There are about 75 head of cattle, 100 horses, and some hogs and chickens. Although about 10 sections of land have been allocated by Council for agricultural purposes, only about 200 ha (500 ac) have been cleared and improved.

According to Canada Land Inventory (C.L.I.), the major physical limitations to agricultural capability are harsh climate, weak soil structure, and low soil permeability. There are also areas of organic soils or muskeg.

Although the C.L.I. inventory indicates there is little potential for long season wheat and warm temperature vegetables, there are few insurmountable soil and climate limitations for the production of short season barley, oats, rapeseed and grasses and legumes for seed, hay or pasture. Drainage of wet soils can often be improved through removal of vegetative cover. About two and a half to three townships of moderate capability (C.L.I. class 4) land exist on the Settlement.

Limiting socio-economic factors include: small parcel size, shortage of capital, opportunity for off-farm employment, low expectations, lack of modern equipment, difficulty in obtaining credit, and lack of modern farm management practices. To address the above physical and socio-economic limitations, the following actions are recommended;

- A detailed agricultural capability survey should be undertaken.

- Efforts should be made to increase the production of early maturing and cool climate species of grains, oilseeds, and forages. Similarly, increased production of livestock should be considered to develop the agricultural base, thereby providing stable on Settlement jobs and future revenue.

- Commercial production of horses and other specialty crops such as honey should be considered.

- Council should encourage the development of existing agricultural allocations.

- Small agricultural parcels should be consolidated into larger more viable sized units.

- Before allocating new farm parcels, detailed soil capability testing should be done, legal surveying completed, groundwater quality and quantity determined, forestry capability evaluated, recreation potential identified, and the availability of future road access and power line extensions planned.

- New farmland should only be allocated to settlers with demonstrated farming skills and the capital necessary to operate successfully.

- New clearing should be concentrated to create larger fields in consolidated blocks, rather than smaller, isolated parcels.

- The use of fire to maintain grassland should be considered.

- Development of the community pasture would stimulate expansion of cow/calf operations and commercial horse production.

- Settlers and Council should take advantage of the advisory services of the Alberta Agriculture District Agriculturalist in High Prairie and the Agriculture Canada Research Station at Beaverlodge to obtain:
  - (i) day-to-day agricultural advice; and
  - (ii) assistance with the preparation of an agricultural development plan or strategy.

- Establishment of an agricultural service board type of committee should be considered to promote agricultural development and to coordinate agricultural programs with Council, settlers, and government departments.

- Settlers interested in farming should expand their agricultural knowledge by taking agricultural training courses and by working for successful farmers in the area before applying for agricultural allotments.

- To update and upsize their farm equipment, settlers should consider pooling or sharing through a co-op or other joint venture to reduce individual costs and to increase utilization of the equipment.

1.6 Forestry

Tree species of commercial value include: white spruce, trembling aspen, and balsam poplar. Balsam fir, jack pine, and white birch exist, but not in sufficient quantities. In the past logging and a sawmill provided employment for residents and revenue for the Settlement. The mill was removed from the Settlement due to declining timber reserves.

Based on the Canada Land Inventory (C.L.I.), lands in the Settlement have moderate forestry capability (C.L.I. class 4) and lower capability (C.L.I. class 7). Physical limitations include weak soil structure and excess soil moisture.

There are about 19,476 cubic metres (12,000,000 foot board measure) of timber (spruce) remaining on the Settlement. A reforestation program has been started at Gift Lake. In 1979, 70,000 white spruce seedlings were planted near Foster Lake. Several other areas are regenerating naturally.

- An up-to-date inventory of fir, spruce, pine, aspen, and poplar reserves should be undertaken.

- A policy of scaled down timber harvesting and accelerated reforestation is recommended to rebuild the forest reserves for future use.

- Additional forestry opportunity exists at Gift Lake if the proposed chip or flake board plant opens in the region, thereby creating a commercial market for the aspen and poplar reserves.

- Forest cutting and reforestation could be managed to be compatible with game ranching.

1.7 Wildlife Resources

Residents commercial fish in Utikuma (Big Whitefish) Lake and other nearby lakes during season. Important commercial species include whitefish, perch, tullibee, and jack fish. In 1981, Gift Lake and Big Prairie Settlement fishermen shared a whitefish quota of 68,040 kg. (150,000 quota on Utikuma Lake.

Utikuma is a productive lake with few limitations for commercial fishing. It has the capacity to produce 453,600 kg to 600,400 kg (1 million to 1.5 million lb) of fish per year.

According to the Canada Land Inventory, most of Gift Lake Settlement has moderate capability (C.L.I. cass 4) for ungulates. Fur bearing animals, moose, caribou, and deer can be found throughout most of the Settlement.

The larger lakes and their shorelands have higher capability (C.L.I. class 3) and very high capability (C.L.I. class 2) for waterfowl.

- Long Lake and the unnamed lake 8 km (5 mi) to the west should be investigated for their commercial potential for perch and jack fish respectively. If feasible, stocking should be considered.

- The economic viability of the Utikuma Lake fishery could be improved by erecting an ice storage shed and placing temporary refrigeration trailers on the lake shore.

- To reduce pressure on the Joussard plant, fishermen should consider taking some of their harvest to the packing plant at Faust.

- The feasibility of setting up a game ranching operation (buffalo, elk, moose, deer) should be studied.

- As previously mentioned, game ranching could complement other land management activities such as forestry and agriculture, and therefore the planning for such ventures should be coordinated.

- Agricultural programs to provide technical advice and low interest loans for game ranching should be created.

1.8 Population

The 1981 census sponsored by the Metis Development Branch indicates population 607, as increase of 143 over the 1980 census. At least part of the increase however, can be attributed to the different method used in surveying. The 1980 census counted only those residents on the Settlement at the time of survey, whereas the 1981 census included those temporarily living off the Settlement, but still holding Settlement membership.

Reflecting this historic pattern of moving on and off the Settlement, the population in the last decade has fluctuated, but increased. The population age structure is also changing. In 1970 the child population (pre-school and school) was 78.5% of the population, but by 1981 this figure had dropped to 38.4%. The aging population structure is largely a result of decline in family unit size (which has declined from 7.4. persons per household in 1975 to 5.3 in 1981).

In-migration rather than natural population increase is therefore likely to be the most important factor in influencing population charge. In-migration could be stimulated by several external factors:

i) continued high farmland (off-Settlement) prices, high interest rates, and housing costs;

(ii) creation of nearby off-Settlement jobs, e.g., proposed flakeboard plant; or

(iii) possible transfer of sub-surface mineral rights by court decision to the Settlements.

- Social programs and community facility development should reflect the changing nature of the population structure.

1.9 Employment

Employment is divided between full time work for government agencies, and seasonal or part-time work in the private sector. Government jobs are in administration, clerical, positions, forest management, maintenance, transportation, food services, education and fire fighting. Private sector jobs are in logging contracting, oil and gas exploration, brushing and clearing, fishing, farming, construction trades and heavy equipment operation. Due to the sawmill closure, declining timber reserves, and slumps in the forest industry and oil and gas exploration, unemployment is becoming a serious problem on Gift Lake.

. Efforts should be made to upgrade the job skills of residents.

. Attempts should be made to create steady employment or permanent part-time employment on or near the Settlement. Ideally these new jobs should fit in with existing seasonal employment patterns.

. Expanding the reforestation program, obtaining a portable sawmill, developing the agricultural potential, and initiating game ranching all could provide long term on-Settlement employment based on renewable resources.

1.10 Housing

There has been active participation in several housing development programs including: the Metis Development Branch (MDB) program, Emergency Trailer Program (ETP), Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and Rural Home Assistance Program (RHAP). RHAP is currently the most important program under which at least four homes can be constructed annually with a materials (up to $18,000) grant and manpower training programs for labour costs.

Present housing is nearly fully occupied with only five vacant homes. Many of the older homes, however, are in need of repair or replacement. Approximately 68% of the housing is located in the hamlet. Present housing stock totals 120 residences, including 62 MDB, 24 other, 24 RHAP, and 10 ETP funded units.

The RHAP houses are all new and in good condition. Many of the other MDB assisted homes, however, are in poor condition and in need of replacement or repair.

Although it is difficult to determine what effect the current unemployment situation could have on future housing needs, the possibility of a continuing steady rise in population cannot be discounted. Council already considers there to be a shortage of housing and an increase in population, or continuation of the trend toward smaller family size could worsen the situation.

- Suggestions for reducing the housing shortage include:

  (i) accelerating the number of RHAP houses built each year;
  (ii) obtaining additional emergency trailers (ETP);
  (iii) encouraging settlers to build their own homes; and
  (iv) repairing existing houses using RRAP funding.

1.11 Infrastructure Services

The road network is not highly developed, although several kilometres of additional graded and gravelled road were built by Alberta Transportation during the summer of 1981. The main access to the Settlement is by Secondary Highway #750. A grass landing strip is located near the hamlet.

There is no communal water or sewer system in the hamlet, but several of the community facilities and the teacherages are connected to a water line and sewer lagoon. Most residents obtain their drinking water from the water point at the reservoir and water treatment facility. The water line may have spare capacity, but the teacherages are the only homes connected to it.

Recreation facilities include: a ball diamond, skating rink, recreation centre, gym, and rodeo grounds. Other community facilities include: a community hall, Settlement Administration Office (which also houses the Post Office), two churches and a Community Vocational Centre. Homes are heated with propane, oil, or wood, and power is available to most residences. Grades K to 9 attend school in the hamlet. High school pupils attend High Prairie schools. Commercial facilities include a gas sales outlet and confectionery, and one or two tire repair businesses.

- Council would like additional road construction to provide better access to Sandy Bay on Utikuma (Big Whitefish) Lake. This would provide better access for commercial fishing and for the recreation site on Sandy Bay, where Council is considering developing camping, picnicking, boating, and fishing facilities.

- Council should consider obtaining a maintenance building for storage and repair of Settlement equipment, and possibly fire fighting equipment if it becomes available.

- When planning road extensions to new areas, Council should consider the agricultural capability, forestry capability, recreation potential, groundwater quality and supply, and the availability of funds for power line and telephone extensions.

1.12 Hamlet

The hamlet is the focal point of the Settlement. About 68% of the dwellings (84 units) and nearly all the community facilities and commercial services are located there. The hamlet covers about 46 hectares (115 acres). Although most of this area has been allocated into 37 metre by 91 metre (120 ft by 300 ft) lots, there are 17 vacant lots. In total there are approximately 60 lots in the Settlement some of which have 38 m (126 ft) frontage. To reduce the housing shortage and accommodate future growth, the following suggestions are made.

- Through filling and drainage, the existing vacant lots could be developed to provide space for at least 17 additional homes.

- Higher densities of lots should be considered. The existing vacant lots could be replotted into smaller lots as could lots with existing substandard housing. Higher lot density and infill on vacant lots would increase the feasibility of obtaining a communal water and sewer system to serve all hamlet residences.

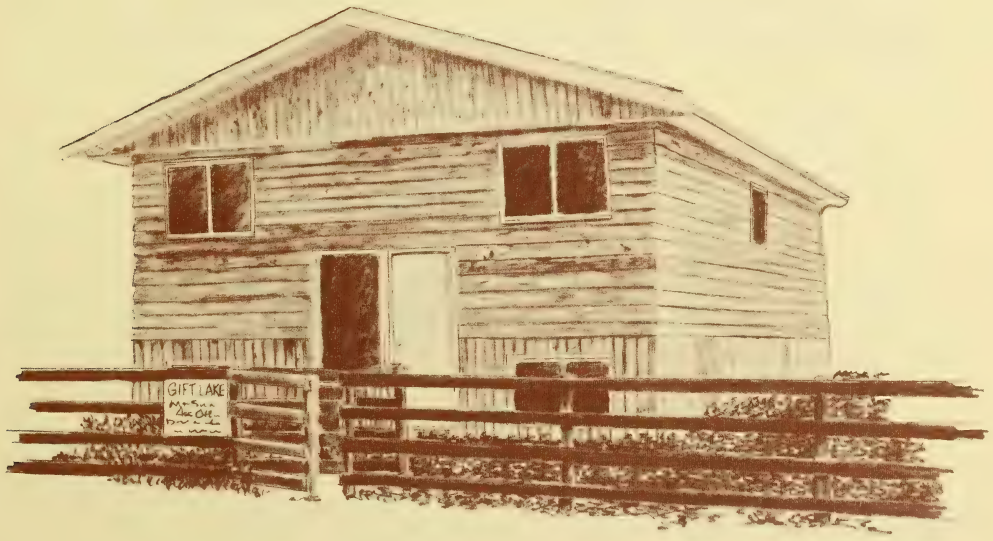
- Prior to development to higher densities or creation of any new lots, legal surveying should be conducted.

- Additional housing could also be located on the seven or eight vacant lots in the subdivision located 1.6 km (1 mi) east of the hamlet.

- Another alternative to reducing the housing shortage would be to create a subdivision of rural residential parcels along the new road extending around the north side of Gift Lake. Before developing lots in this area, it is recommended that proper site planning be carried out and surveying conducted. It should be noted that decentralizing new lots to rural areas could reduce the feasibility of a communal water and sewer system in the hamlet.

Implementation of Recommendations

To assist in the implementation of the above suggestions for development and additional research, it is recommended that Council prepare a plan to guide future development and land use on the Settlement. Such a document may be a comprehensive land use plan, a five-year development plan, a community plan or a hamlet plan. Whatever approach is taken, the document should address what actions are to be taken, and what criteria will be used in making land use decisions to meet the objectives of the Settlement. It is also advised that the planning process provide for public involvement during the preparation of the plan.



2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inventory and analyze the major physical and cultural resources of Gift Lake Metis Settlement. Prepared by the Municipal Planning Section for the Metis Development Branch and Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council, the report is intended to be used as an information base. It represents the first phase in the planning process and provides a departure point for future land use and development planning. It is expected that the inventory will be used by the Federation of Metis Settlement Associations, Settlement residents, government agencies, adjacent municipalities, and the private sector in making decisions related to the Settlement.

The priorities established in consultation with the Metis Development Branch, Federation of Metis Settlement Associations and the Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council include the following.

1) Prepare a land use inventory which is acceptable to the Metis Development Branch and one which is useful and understandable to Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council.

2) Collect and analyze baseline data on physical and human resources which will meet the information requirements of the next stage in the planning process.

3) Highlight positive changes which have occurred on the Settlement and focus on development potential.

The report is organized as follows. Chapter One provides an executive summary. Chapter Two outlines the purpose, intended use, organization, methodology and limitations. Regional context is discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four examines the physical resources including sections on climate, topography and drainage, geology, domestic water resources and supply, soils and agriculture, forestry and wildlife resources. Maps are provided illustrating

locations of physical resources, existing land use, and potential uses. Chapter Five discusses human resources and includes sections on administrative background, population, employment and community participation. Chapter Six provides data and analyses on housing and infrastructure services. Roads and the water delivery system are mapped. Chapter Seven focuses on the Settlement hamlet or centre. The pattern of building location is mapped and growth potential discussed.

The methodology used involved collection and synthesis of data and information both from primary and secondary sources. Interviews and meetings with the Settlement Council, Settlement staff, Metis Development Branch, Federation of Metis Settlement Associations, other government staff, and private consultants provided valuable information and insight. To simplify presentation of Canada Land Inventory data, the capability classes and subclasses were grouped to show areas of the Settlement with higher capability for agriculture, forestry, and wildlife development. For each resource sector the existing situation and prospects for development are discussed.

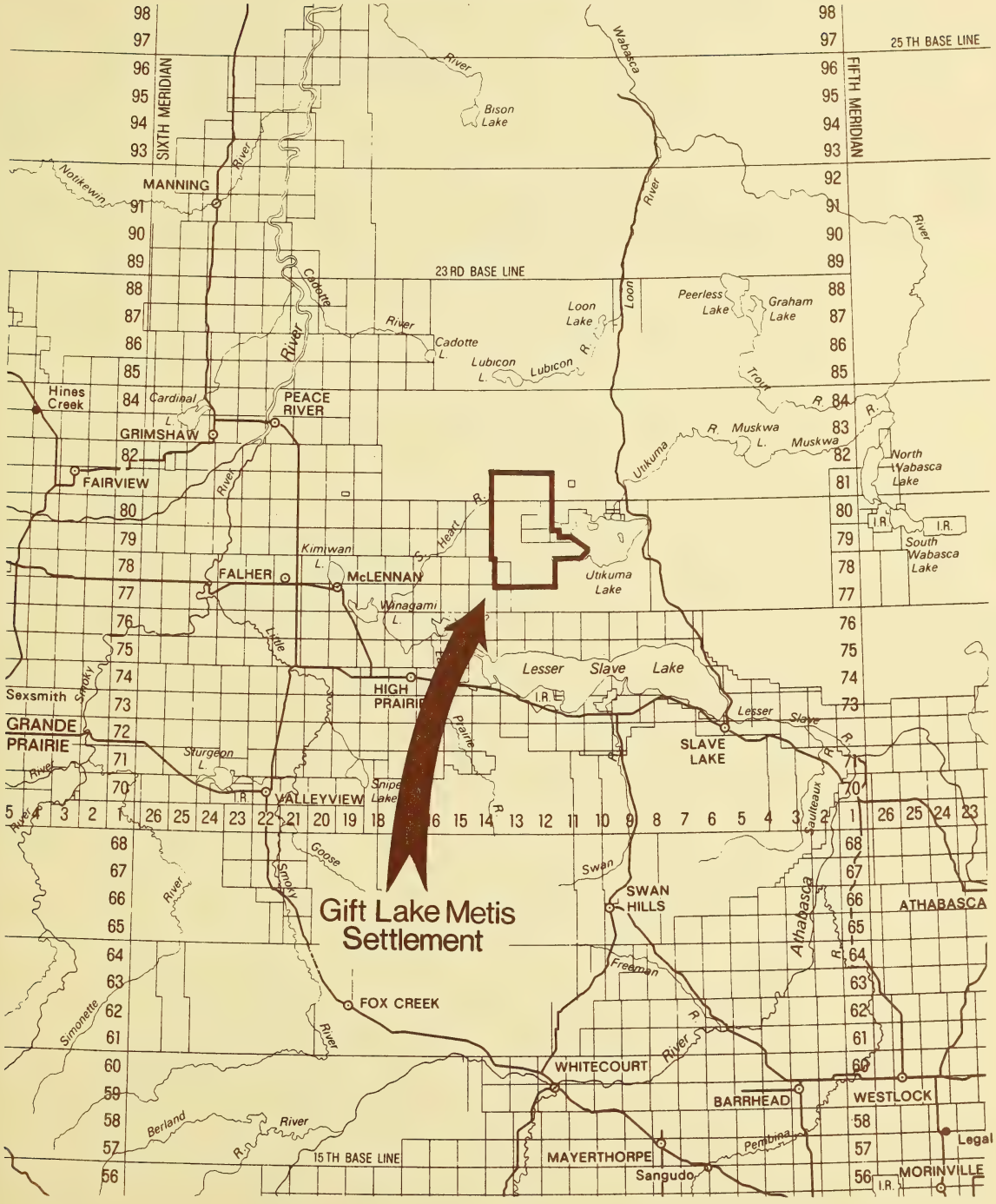
The report is not without limitations. Because it represents the first effort to document and map all the major physical and cultural resources of Gift Lake Metis Settlement, it is anticipated that there will be minor errors and omissions. The level of detail was frequently hampered by inadequate, outdated, and even conflicting data. For example, legal surveys of lot and many rural parcel locations are unavailable at this time. Information on annual grain, forage and livestock production varies in accuracy and availability. Detailed agricultural and forestry inventories are not available. Despite these limitations, this inventory provides an initial information base which can be added to and revised as land uses change and development occurs.

3.0 Regional Context

Gift Lake Metis Settlement is 40 kilometres (25 miles) north of Lesser Slave Lake and directly west of Utikuma Lake. Bounded on the west by Big Prairie Metis Settlement, Gift Lake Settlement extends from Township 78 (west of the Fifth meridian) in the south to Township 81 in the north. From east to west, Gift Lake extends from Range 10 to Range 3. The Settlement has a land area of 83,916 hectares (207273 acres) (Metis Development Branch, 1980). This area of nearly 839 km^2 (324 sq. mi) makes Gift Lake the second largest Metis Settlement in Alberta.

Gift Lake is 459 km (287 mi) northwest of Edmonton by Highway #2 and Highway #750, and is 90 km (56 mi) by road northeast of High Prairie. Access to Gift Lake from High Prairie is gained by travelling 16 km (10 mi) east of High Prairie on Highway #2 to the junction of Highway #2 and Highway #720. Gift Lake hamlet is 80 km (50 mi) north of this junction on Highway #720. It is paved from Highway #2 to Grouard, and gravelled from Grouard to Gift Lake. Gift Lake has a grass landing strip near the Settlement hamlet (see Map 6.1). Map 3.1 shows Gift Lake Settlement in its regional context.

Regional Context



Source:
Surveys Branch, Alberta Transportation

4.0 Physical Resources

4.1 Climate

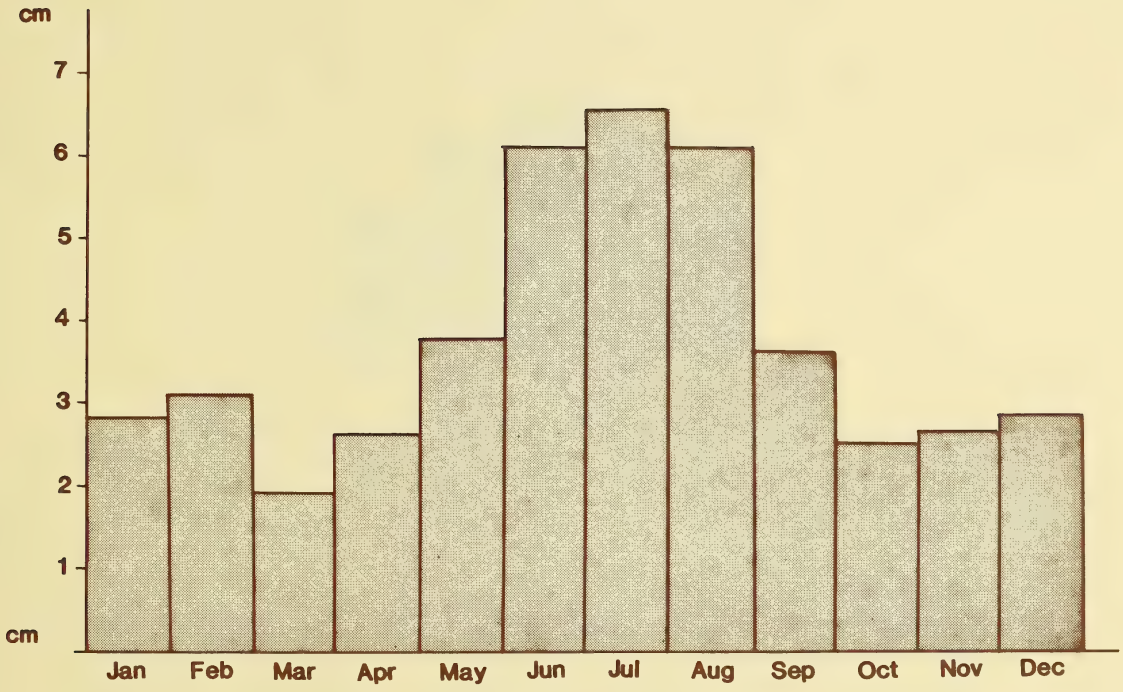
The climate of Gift Lake is continental, with warm summers and cold winters. As there are no climatological records available for Gift Lake itself, weather records from nearby stations have been taken as an indication of the climatic conditions on the Settlement. Most of the precipitation, temperature, and frost-free data are from the period 1941-1970. Precipitation is from the McLennan station, mean total temperatures from Salt Prairie, frost-free days from Peavine, and growing days from Grouard.

Because Gift Lake Settlement hamlet is higher in elevation than the other stations and less influenced by a large water body, this data should be interpreted in general terms only.

McLennan has a yearly average precipitation rate of 44.6 cm (17.6 in) per year, most of which falls during the spring and growing season. The greatest amount of rainfall occurs in June, July, and August (Environment Canada, 1973). These are also the most important growing months in this area. It is reported by Gift Lake settlers that in one out of every three or four years, insufficient precipitation is received for good crop production. Drought in June and July can retard crop growth and create difficulty in raising grain crops to maturity. Such fluctuations in precipitation restrict production to coarse grains (barley and oats, oilseeds rapeseed), and forage crops (Nichols, 1981). Precipitation is shown by Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1

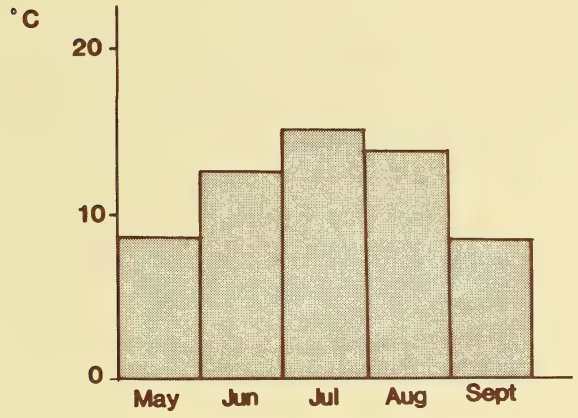
MEAN TOTAL PRECIPITATION - McLENNAN 1941-1970



Source: Canadian Normals Vol. 2 Precipitation 1941-1970, Environment Canada

Grouard has an average winter temperature of -11.1°C (12.0°F) and an average spring and growing season temperature of 10.6°C (51.0°F). The yearly average temperature is 1.2°C (34.2°F) (Odynsky, 1952). Salt Prairie temperatures for the growing season are as follows: May 8.9°C (48°F), June 12.2°C (54°F), July 14.9°C (58.8°F), August 13.4°C (56.1°F) and September 8.1°C (46.6°F) (Environment Canada, 1973). Mean daily temperatures are shown by Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2
MEAN DAILY TEMPERATURE - SALT PRAIRIE
May - Sept 1941 - 1970



Source: Canadian Normals Vol. 1 Temperature 1941-1970, Environment Canada

The average growing season (growing days above -1.7°C or 28°F) is 99 days. This period is generally free from killing frost. Local changes in topography and vegetative cover however, can increase the likeihood of frost. Where natural air drainage is impeded, frost conditions can be expected to be more severe. Residents claim that in some years there are only 60 frost-free days on the Settlement.

According to the frost data recorded at Peavine for the period 1941-1970, the average frost-free period is 91 days (Hemmerick and Kendall, 1972). On an average the last frost of the spring occurs June 1 and the first fall frost on September 1. However, during this 24 year recording period, the longest frost-free period was 137 days and the shortest 23 days. This considerable fluctuation in frost-free days limits production to hardier crops.

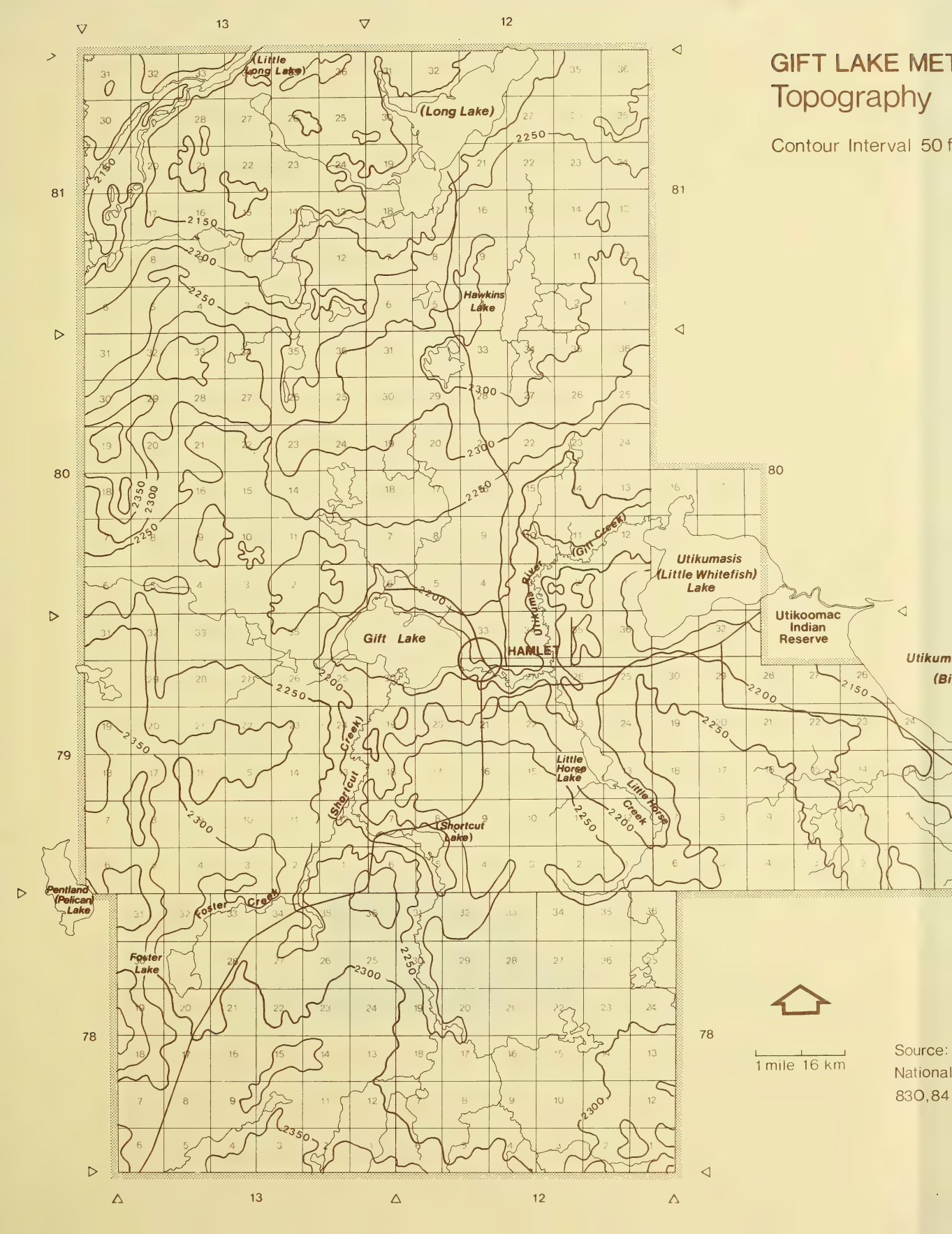
4.2 Topography and Drainage

The topography of Gift Lake Settlement is generally very flat with extensive low lying, swampy areas. The vertical rise in elevation on the settlement is only 91 m (300 ft). The lowest elevation on the settlement is 640 m (2100 ft) above mean sea level (A.M.S.L.) at the surface level of Utikuma Lake. The highest elevation on the Settlement is 731.5 m (2400 ft) A.M.S.L. and is found just northwest of Foster Lake. Gift Lake hamlet is at an elevation of 655.3 m (2150 ft) A.M.S.L.

The southern half and western fringe of the settlement are characterized by level and undulating topography, to gently rolling topography (see Map 4.1). The level and undulating areas have slopes up to 1.5% (Wynnyk, 1963). The gently rolling areas have slopes ranging from 2% to 9%. The topography in this area does not present any real difficulty in the construction of homes or roads.

The south half of the Settlement is subject to poorly drained lakes and swamps, and slow running and intermittent streams. Construction of buildings and roads is made difficult in these areas due to poor drainage conditions (see Map 4.2 for location of low-lying, boggy sites).

Areas to the north and northeast of the hamlet are generally of rolling topography. Slopes in this area range from 10% to 15%. This area has extensive flat and poorly drained sites.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Topography
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Pentland (Pelican) Lake
Foster Creek
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Source:
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Map 4.1

METIS SETTLEMENT

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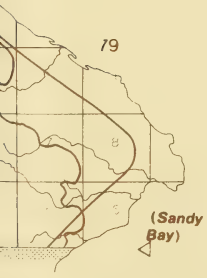
50 ft. (15.24m)



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4.3 Geology

4.3.1 Bedrock Geology

All of Gift Lake Metis Settlement is underlain by Smoky River Group shale. This formation is of the Colorado age and is of marine origin. Such formations are thin bedded, dark to black shales with occasional ironstone and pyrite nodules (Odynsky, 1952).

Three different glacial deposits are commonly found lying over the Smoky Group Formation (Odynsky, 1952). The lowest of these is a yellowish brown to brownish grey, compacted, sandy clay till. This older till does not form the parent material of any of the soil in the area. The second glacial deposit consists of a greyish brown to yellowish brown, sandy clay loam to clay till. It is exposed in places and forms the parent material of Braeburn and Saddle soils. The third deposit frequently lies above the preceding one and consists of well sorted, uniform clay that has few stones. This deposit is derived largely from Smoky River shales and forms the parent material of Donnelly, Esher and Landry soils.

4.3.2 Oil and Gas

Most of Gift Lake Settlement is in the Peace River Oil Sands deposit zone. There has been considerable oil exploration activity on the Settlement in the past. At present there are twenty-six abandoned or capped oil wells and one producing oil well on the Settlement (Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, 1981). The producing well is located near Utikuma Lake (Big Whitefish) in Township 79, Range 11, Section 1. According to Metis Development Branch figures (1980) there are six wellsites and access roads and four seismograph programs with a total of 216.5 km (134.5 mi) of seismic lines.

There has been a recent increase in oil exploration activity, which provides short-term employment for residents in the brushing seismic lines and access roads. This activity not only employs settlers but also opens up additional areas for agricultural and recreational development.

4.3.3 Surficial Geology

4.3.3.1 Sand and Gravel

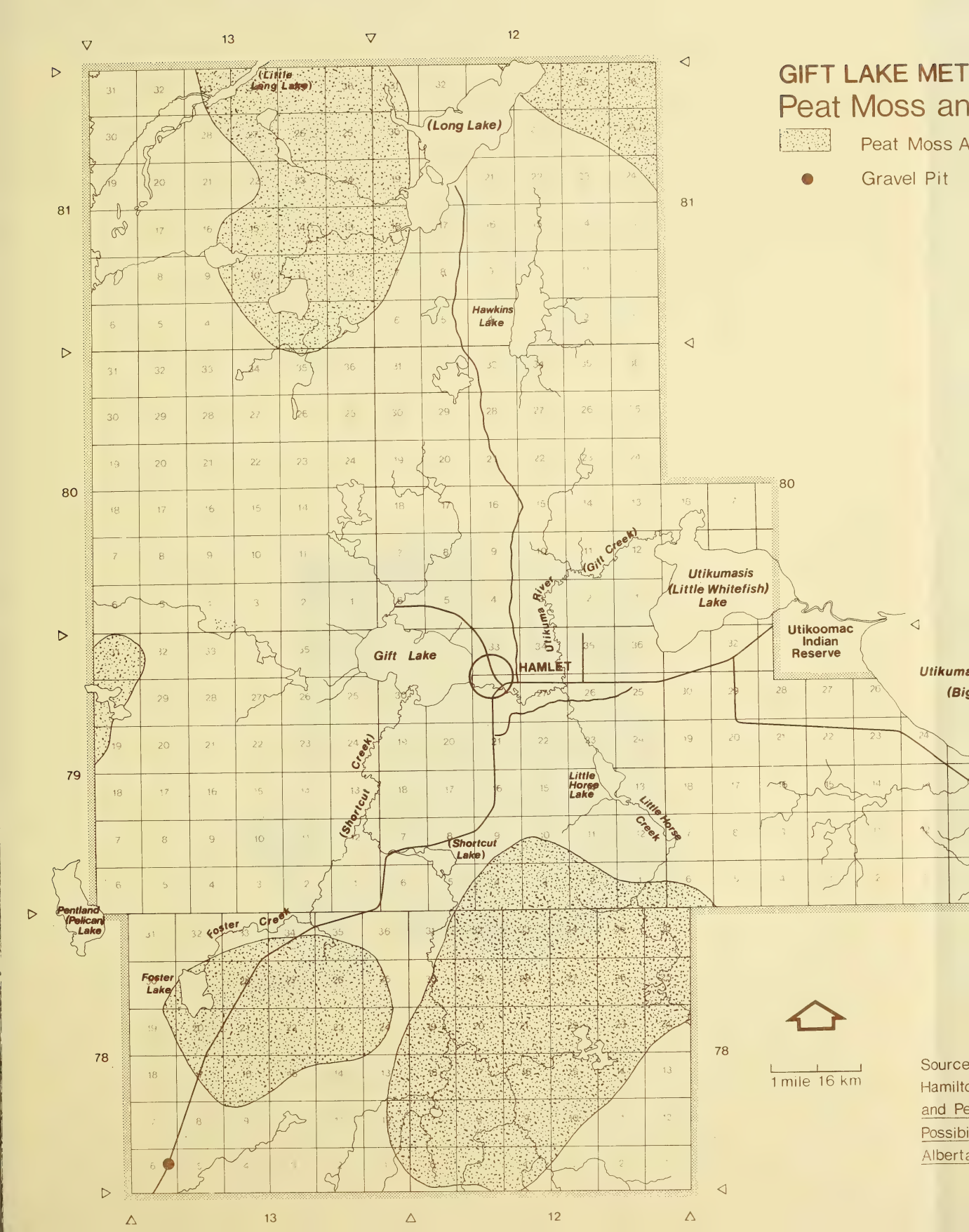
According to a preliminary analysis of existing soil maps, geology maps, and aerial photography, Gift Lake does not offer good prospects for aggregates (Hudson, 1981). Most of the low-lying areas on the Settlement consist of finely textured, shallow surficial deposits. There are, however, small sites along Highway #750 that have been used by Alberta Transportation for local roads (see Map 4.2). At present, gravel for road construction on Gift Lake Settlement has been trucked in from the High Prairie area. Although the potential for commercial sources is limited on Gift Lake, further study is needed to find additional sites for local use.

4.3.3.2 Peat Moss

Commercial peat moss is used as a soil conditioner for lawns, shrubs, and gardens. In the future peat moss may also be used in peat-fired electricity generating plants. The peat moss industry is growing in economic importance in Alberta. Production has increased substantially in the past two decades. Alberta has the largest reserve of peat moss in Canada.

Like sand and gravel, peat moss is a non-renewable mineral included under surface rights. Gift Lake Settlement has abundant peat moss bogs. Generally the depth of peat on the settlement is from 70 to 122 centimetres (24 to 48 inches) (Wynnyk, 1963). Map 4.2 shows the areas with bog coverage of 60% or greater, and depths of 0.6 m (2 ft) or greater. Black spruce is the characteristic tree cover in moss bogs.

Further study into the economic feasibility of commercial peat production and the extent of the reserves is necessary. There are several local and external conditions which must be present for commercial production. Locally there must be access to the resource, a supply of natural gas or other energy source for drying, and an ample supply of quality peat with a high concentration of sphagnum moss. Access to the peat in the south should be available from Highway #750, but there is no good access to the peat in the north of the Settlement. There is a supply of natural gas on the Settlement. Development of peat moss deposits near rivers or at the head of ravines should be avoided as there areas function as drainage retention zones (Amirault, 1981).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Map 4.2

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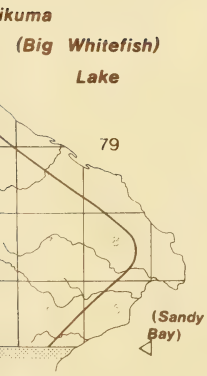

ource:
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The quality of the reserve, its size, depth, and sphagnum content would have to be assessed. External factors such as market demand, competition, distance to market, transportation costs, and financing would also have to be considered prior to developing the peat resource. Should results from the above suggested studies be positive, a commercial operation could be considered. An average economic plant size for a small scale commercial operation would have an annual productive capacity of 5080000 kg or 5000 tons (Hamilton, 1975).

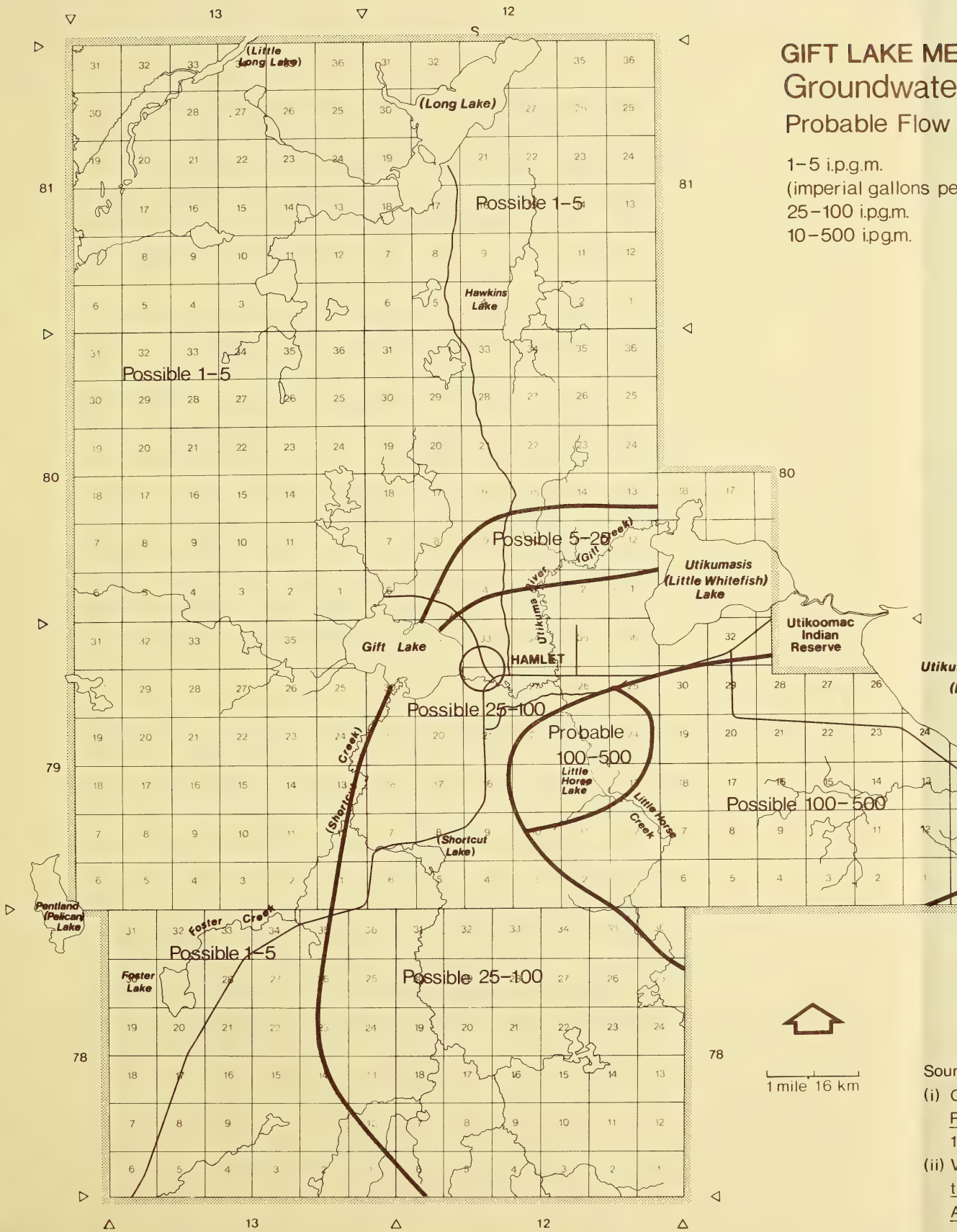
4.4 Domestic Water Resources and Supply

The primary potable water source for residents of Gift Lake Settlement is water drawn and treated from Gift Lake. There are no deep wells on the Settlement. The Settlement is generally situated in a zone of sulphate, and contamination of groundwater supply would likely occur in deep water wells (Hardick, 1981). Map 4.3 indicates the probable groundwater flow for different areas of the Settlement.

Prior to implementation of the water treatment program, there were problems of bacterial contamination of lake water as a result of an inadequate sewerage system. The school sewage lagoon is located between the school and the lake. During spring runoff the danger of raw effluent entering the lake exists. A similar danger exists from runoff from private privies or outhouses near the lake. The water treatment plant was constructed to overcome the danger of water contamination.

The water treatment plant process operates as follows. Water is drawn from a deep water area in Gift Lake, filtered, stored, and treated in the reservoir under the plant. The treated water is then pumped via a water line to the school, teacherages, skating rink, Settlement Office, community hall, and the three water stand points (Map 6.3). The water treatment plant is designed to produce 113,560 litres (30,000 gallons) per day. The initial cost of the plant was $207,269 (Alberta Environment, 1981).

The water treatment plant adequately supplies the present domestic water needs of the Settlement. Most household water is drawn from the water point at the reservoir near the lake. The water system has several problems. Some vandalism has been experienced and sanding in of the lake intake has occurred. The latter problem has apparently been resolved by extension of the intake line to a deeper part of the lake. There also have been reports of poor taste and odour in the water. This



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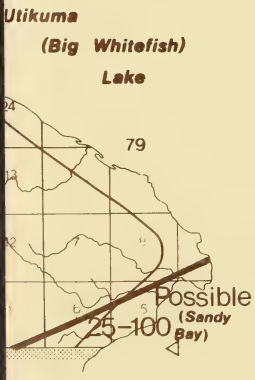


Sources:

(i) Ceroici, W. Hydrology of the Peerless Lake Area, Alberta, 1979

(ii) Vogwill, R.I.J. Hydrology of the Lesser Slave Lake Area, Alberta, 1978

is being dealt with by adding chlorine and potassium to the reservoir. Another problem is that the two water stand points furthest from the reservoir are malfunctioning. The Northlands School Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the plant and Alberta Environment checks the delivery system in a regular basis.

As approximately 68% of the homes on the Settlement are located in the hamlet, a more efficient water supply and delivery system should be considered. In the short term upgrading of the existing system is recommended. This would involve several improvements. First, additional water points could be established and the existing ones better maintained. Second, a regular water truck hauling service would assist in the delivery of water from the water points to residences. Third, cisterns would provide a short term solution to water supply storage in the home. The use of cisterns would reduce the number of trips to the water stand points, and would make possible water softening treatment and running water in the home.

A long term solution to water supply and delivery may be to install a communal water distribution system linking all the homes in the hamlet. Investigation into the feasibility of a water distribution system is needed. Besides determining overall costs it should be determined beforehand how many households would be willing to bear the costs of connecting up with the system and putting plumbing facilities into the homes. Another major consideration is whether or not the existing intake and treatment plant has capacity to handle the substantial increases in consumption which would occur. In addition, the sewage lagoon would have to process increased volumes of effluent.

4.5 Agriculture

4.5.1 Soil Capability for Agriculture

The potential for agriculture is related to many factors of production, both physical and socio-economic. The socio-economic factors are dealt with in Section 4.5.2. The physical factors refer to the land resource characteristics including: soil capability, topography, and climate. The limitations on agricultural production due to climate (lack of moisture in spring, variable number of frost-free days) and topography (steep slopes which preclude mechanized practices and accelerate soil erosion) were discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

This section focuses on soil capability, one of the most important factors in growing crops and sustaining livestock. According to the Canada Land Inventory the soils on Gift Lake Settlement have limited capability for the production of agricultural crops. Generally, grey-wooded soils are found over the till substrata (Wynnyk, 1963). These soils are only moderately to marginally productive as the soil structures are weak and the soil permeability is low. The range of crops is restricted to hardier feed grain and forage crops. Appreciable amounts of muskeg throughout the Settlement further limits agricultural potential. The soils capability information utilized in this inventory is based on Canada Land Inventory (C.L.I.) data and information obtained from the Settlement Council. It should be noted that C.L.I. is very general and should only be used until more detailed soil capability inventories are available.

For the purposes of this report, the applicable C.L.I. classifications have been grouped into categories of: moderate capability, lower capability and organic (see Map 4.4). The categories were combined and simplified to better illustrate the potential of different areas of Gift Lake Metis Settlement. Moderate capability includes lands which are C.L.I. class 4, while the lower capability includes C.L.I. classes 5,

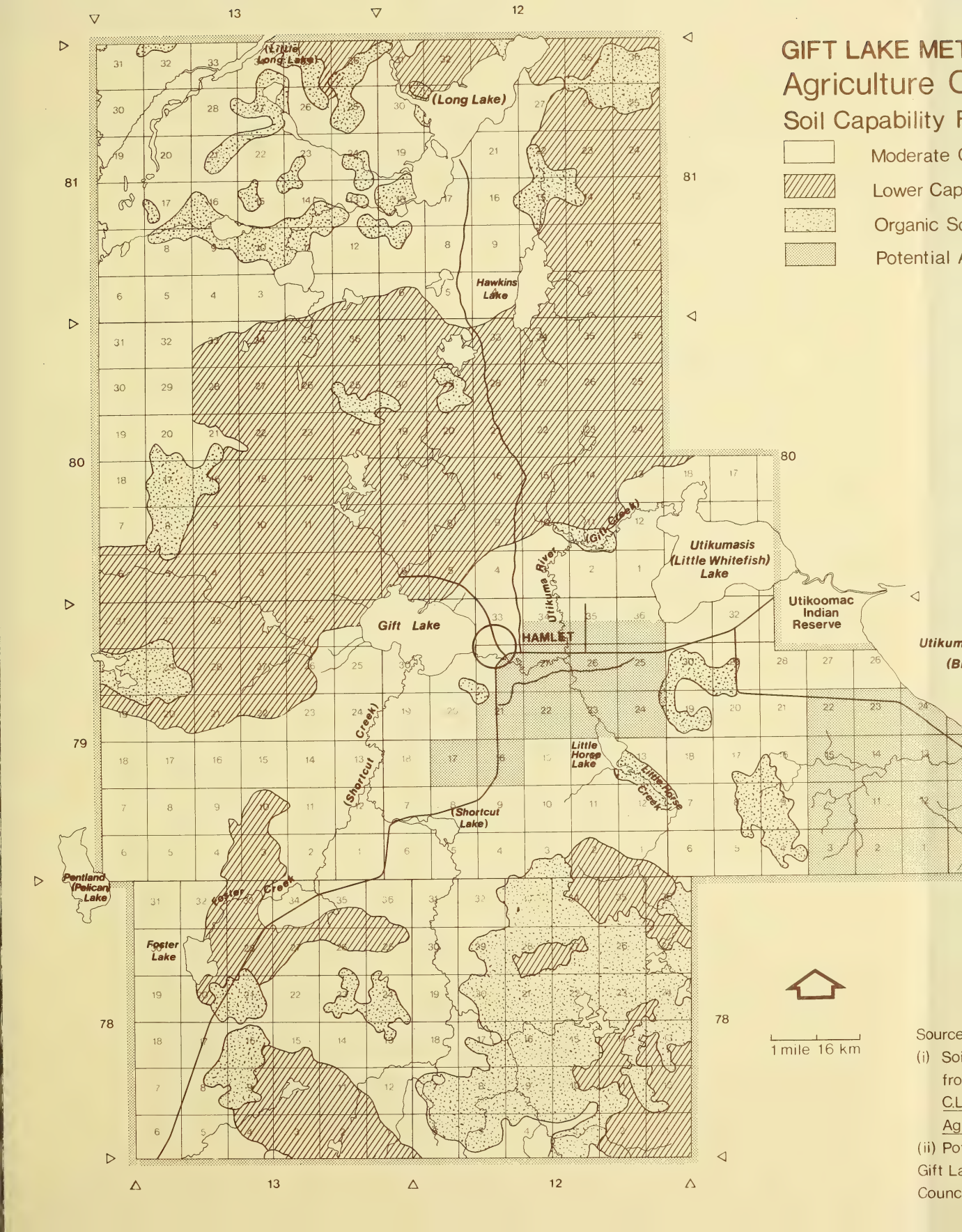
6 and 7. There are no C.L.I. class 1, 2 or 3 agricultural capability lands on Gift Lake Settlement. The areas identified by Council as having agricultural potential are also mapped.

Much of the south half of the Settlement has moderate agricultural capability. The soils surrounding the hamlet and extending 4.8 km (3 mi) east have a low moisture holding capability and are shallow in depth. The remainder of the moderate capability land in the southern half of the Settlement and in the northwest corner are shallow and have weak soil structure. These areas are, however, capable of producing some feed grains and most forage crops. Most of the farming takes place in the moderate capability areas. Council also reported that some land within the moderate capability area has potential for agricultural development (see Map 4.4.)

The lower capability category covers much of the northern half of the Settlement, an area which shares the soil characteristics of the moderate capability soils, except that the limitations are more severe and there is a greater degree of muskeg areas. The soils in this category are too finely and weakly structured to support the production of improved crops. The primary agricultural capability of this zone is for pasture land.

The fourth category is comprised of scattered sites of organic soils. Without drainage, these areas of muskeg have no capability for agricultural practice.

In summary, although the C.L.I. inventory indicates there is little potential for long season wheat and warm temperature vegetables, there are few insurmountable soil and climate limitations for the production of short season barley, oats, rapeseed, and some grasses and legumes for seed, hay, and pasture. Wet soils should not really present a limitation in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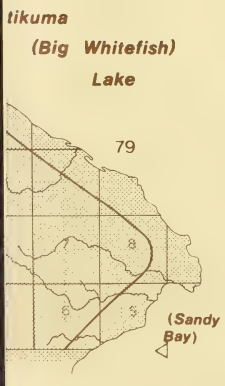

ources:

) Soil Capability Areas adapted from Environment Canada, C.L.I. Soil Capability for Agriculture, 84 B and 83 O.

i) Potential agriculture area – ift Lake Metis Settlement ouncil, 1981

areas of limited precipitation, since drainage can often be improved through removal of vegetative cover (Henning, 1981; Mills, 1981). A detailed agricultural capability inventory should be undertaken.

4.5.2 Agricultural Development

In the previous subsection on soil capability, the potentials and limitations of the physical resource were examined. This subsection addresses the existing agricultural development and some of the socio-economic factors which affect production.

Due to a number of general factors, farming in northern Alberta on "marginal" agricultural land is a risky business with additional uncertainties not found elsewhere in the province (Northern Alberta Development Council, 1978).

The number of frost-free days fluctuates widely and precipitation varies. Due to the low farm population density, farm supply and farm marketing are more uncertain. Farm research in the north is not as well developed as it is in Southern Alberta. Despite this, the need to carefully balance cereal crop production with forage production to maintain and enhance the productivity of grey-wooded (low organic matter) soils is well-recognized. Similarly, the need to select early maturing and cool climate species is understood (Graves 1981).

More specifically the important socio-economic factors include (Beattie, Bond and Manning, 1981):

(1) land (farm size, fragmentation, percent improved land, distance to market);
(2) labour (age, education and skills, expectations and other opportunities, part-time or full-time, productivity);
(3) capital (income deficiencies, credit sources available, mechanization, agricultural infrastructure, marketing organization, community infrastructure); and

(4) management (knowledge, technology and practices available, capacity to innovate or adapt, crop/livestock selection, intensive/extensive farming strategy).

Several of the above factors affect existing and potential agricultural production on the Settlement. The comments on agriculture are based on comments from Settlement Councillors, Metis Development Branch staff, the District Agriculturalist, an Alberta Agriculture staff, and Agriculture Canada researchers.

Agriculture has never been a major employment or income source on Gift Lake Settlement. The potential for feed grain production is limited somewhat by such factors as poor soils, harsh and fluctuating climates, and lack of local experience in farming practice.

Despite these limitations, increased production of suitable grains, oilseeds, forages, and livestock would be a major stabilizing factor for the Settlement in terms of jobs and future revenues (Horton, 1981).

Throughout the 1970's the area of developed land in tame hay production and pasture land has remained constant. In 1970 80.9 ha (200 ac) were broken by the Metis Rehabilitation Branch (now the Metis Development Branch). This increased the area of improved land on the Settlement to 157 ha (388 ac). Since 1975 the land cleared by the Branch has begun to regenerate back to bush. Map 4.5a shows the locations of fields, pastures, and the community pasture. There has been little additional clearing done on the Settlement for the past six years. A recent Municipal Affairs field inventory (1981) shows there to be approximately 83 ha (205 ac) of tame hay and pasture land on the settlement. Throughout the 1970's production of tame hay at Gift Lake has ranged from between 250 and 300 tons per year (Metis Development Branch statistics).


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Map 4.5a

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Agricultural Land Use

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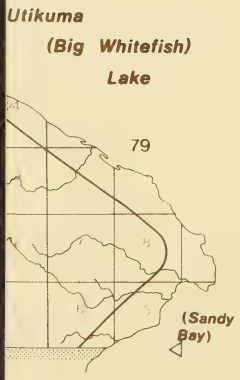

Source:
Gift Lake Metis Settlement
Council, 1981

At present there are five families on the Settlement interested in farming full-time and several others on a part-time basis (Settlement Council, 1981). Since feed grain was sown this year, some of the farmers haul feed for livestock from the Enilda area. All tame hay produced on the Settlement is utilized by the cow-calf operations. There are approximately 75 head of cattle on the Settlement, including a bull provided by the Branch. In addition to cattle, the settlers have about 100 head of horses, and some hogs and chickens.

The land related factors of farm size, fragmentation, percent improved land, relative distance to transportation and markets have a strong influence on future development of agriculture. Because existing farm parcels are small in size and fragmented (due to piecemeal clearing and allocation, and the limited road network) future decisions should be consider consolidating existing allocations into larger more viable units and clearing larger tracts, perhaps in sectors. Allocation of new quarters should be directed to applicants who have demonstrated farming experience, and adequate equipment and capital to develop the land. Prior to allocating agricultural parcels, legal surveys should be undertaken to establish quarter section boundaries.

Future agricultural development on Gift Lake should also focus on pasture land, tame hay production, and feed grain production. This would stimulate the development of cow-calf operations. Development of the community pasture and the considerable amount of allocated land not being farmed would help achieve this objective. Map 4.5b shows the extent of allocated rural land.

The use of fire to maintain grasslands should be considered. This Native range management technique could be an effective and inexpensive way to prevent cleared areas from regenerating to bush (Lynch, 1981).


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Map 4.5 b

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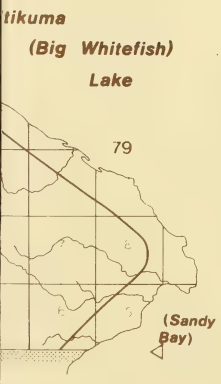

ource:
ift Lake Metis Settlement
ouncil, 1981

Regarding expansion of farmland, one option available is to reclear and rebreak the land broken by the Branch. This would create an additional 90 ha (200 ac) of productive land. A second option is to clear and develop pasture and grazing lands immediately north of Gift Lake. Road access into this area was constructed in 1981. Council is interested in creating 1.2 to 4 ha (3 to 10 ac) lots for residence and pasture purposes along the lake. According to the agriculture capability Map 4.4, the soils in this area are suitable for pasture and grazing lands.

A third option available is to clear and break more land in the moderate capability zone (see Map 4.4). Two areas were specifically mentioned by Council as having potential for expansion (see Map 4.4). The first one is between the airport and Little Horse Lake. Access to this area would not present difficulties as it is not far from Highway #750 and other secondary roads. The second favorable area in this zone is in the southeastern extremity of the Settlement along Utikuma Lake. This area now produces high quality natural hay along the lakeshore. Partial access to this area can be gained by a recently constructed road that parallels Utikuma Lake (see Map 6.2). On both of these areas of potential agricultural expansion, settlement would depend upon the availability of power line extensions. Prior to expansion into new agricultural areas, detailed soil capability testing should be conducted.

Transportation is currently a limiting factor inhibiting agricultural development. Future road locations should be planned to provide access to the areas with higher agricultural potential (see Map 4.4). Grains can be marketed off-Settlement in nearby High Prairie, while the nearest major livestock market is at Valleyview.

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The labour related factors of age, education, skills, expectations, other opportunities, part-time or fulltime farming, and productivity also affect the future of agricultural development. The farmers have experience with cow-calf operations and horses, but few have formal agricultural training. The opportunity for other employment both on and off the Settlement has positive and negative implications. On one hand it may discourage residents from farming as intensively as possible and take farmers away during crucial periods. On the other hand it can provide much needed capital to put into the farming operation. Given the small size of the farm units, it would appear that most of the farmers are part-time in that they receive substantial portions of their income from off-farm employment. This has a tendency to reduce the intensity to which the land is farmed and can make farm credit more difficult to obtain.

The capital related factors for agriculture cannot be ignored. Expansion of existing farm operations, more intensive management of the land, and establishment of new farms will all require extensive capital inputs. Increased mechanization will also require additional capital. Some of the capital could be generated through the sale of grain and hay, and from off-farm employment, but capital assistance will likely be required if significant expansion of agricultural production is anticipated. Bank credit is often unavailable to settlers as they do not hold title to the land. The costs of obtaining large and new machinery could be offset by either sharing equipment among settlers through co-ops, or by leasing equipment which also could be done on a shared basis. Another alternative would be for the beginning farmers to hire out to off-Settlement farmers in return for the use of equipment. Beginning Metis farmers could also take advantage of Alberta Agriculture's "green thumb" program under which a younger farmer works for an established farmer learning farming skills, while Alberta Agriculture subsidizes his salary.

Management can also influence agricultural production potential. Settlement farmers, like many other farmers in northern Alberta, could benefit from new agricultural practices and technology. The limitations and constraints involved with successfully farming marginal agriculture land are considerable.

The type of crop/livestock selection presently being practiced is suited for Gift Lake and has potential for expansion and diversification. Production levels could likely be increased through more intensive arrangement, e.g., crop selection and crop rotation pattern.

In addition to cow-calf operations, another potential development in animal husbandry is commercial breeding of horses. At present there is considerable interest in the raising of horses on the Settlement, but few if any are marketed. Breeding recreational horses should be considered with the aim of generating local employment and income.

Honey production, an activity common in the High Prairie area, would be complementary to forage production. Skills could be learned from successful producers in the area and large amounts of capital are not required. The commercial production of market garden crops such as blueberries, chokecherries, or wild rice could also be investigated.

Prior to expansion of agricultural activities, it is recommended that Council and the farmers consult with the District Agriculturalist and the Beaverlodge Agricultural Research Station for advice and assistance with an agricultural development strategy. In this way, existing productive levels could likely be improved and the uncertainties associated with expanding agriculture could be reduced.

It is also suggested that the establishment of an agricultural service board be considered. This committee would be similar in function to an agricultural service board and could be helpful in promoting agricultural development on the Settlement (Horton, 1981).

4.6 Forestry

Gift Lake Metis Settlement is situated in the Boreal Forest Region and has of mixed wood forest cover types. The characteristic species of potentially commercial value include: white spruce, trembling aspen, and balsalm poplar. Balsam fir, jack pine and white birch exist in insignificant quantities for commercial use. Frequent fires within the last century have led to a patchy cover of tree types. Throughout the Settlement there are large areas of immature aspen stands and isolated stands of white spruce (Sauze Forestry Services Ltd., 1979).

The information on forest capability in this section is based on Canada Land Inventory (C.L.I.) forest capability, and discussions with the Settlement Council and Alberta Forest Service staff. To simplify the C.L.I. classification system two categories are used. As no C.L.I. classes 1 to 3 exist on Gift Lake, class 4 C.L.I. for the purposes of this report is considered to have moderate forestry capability. The only other C.L.I. categories found on Gift Lake are classes 6 and 7, which for the purposes of this report are considered lower capability for commercial forestry. The above two categories and an area indicated by Council to have logging potential are shown on Map 4.6.

The map in Map 4.6 shows there to be two general areas of land capability for forestry. The first has a moderate land capability. It is in this area that most of commercial forestry on Gift Lake takes place. Productivity usually ranges from 3.6 to 4.9 cubic metres per hectare per year (51 to 70 cubic feet per acre per year). The most common limitations to forest productivity in the moderate zone are soil moisture deficiency or soil moisture excess. In most cases the soil structure is weak and water holding capacity is poor. In other areas within this zone the landforms are low lying and water saturation occurs.


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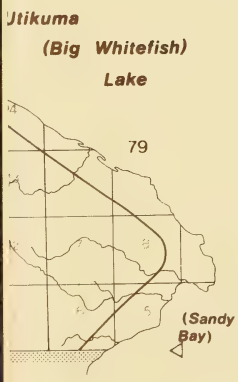

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The second zone has a lower land capability for forestry. It generally consists of areas of excessive soil moisture. Productivity potential is from 2.2 to 3.5 m^3 per ha per year (31 to 50 ft^3 per ac per year), but in very wet sites productivity can be less than 0.7 m^3 per ha per year (10 ft^3 per ac per year).

Forestry has played a major role in the Gift Lake economy. For the past three decades logging operations have been carried out by outside and local contractors. Nelson Lumber from High Prairie provided employment for 10 years by operating a sawmill on the Settlement. The company produced dimension lumber, board lumber, random lengths and rough timbers. It relied entirely on white spruce to produce lumber. Production in 1978-79 was 15,094 cubic metres (9,400,000 foot board measure). Nelson lumber hired an average of 60 seasonal contractors per year and 25 full time sawmill and office employees (Environment Canada and Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, 1979). Locally operated portable sawmills have also generated employment on the Settlement. Nelson Lumber and the portable mills have departed due to a shortage of timber.

A minimum of regulation and management has been applied to the pattern of cutting and timber utilization. Selective cutting of the largest, most mature white spruce stands has gradually lead to the depletion of this resource. In 1979 there were 32,460 m^3 (20,000,000 fbm) left to be harvested on the Settlement (Sauze Forestry Services Ltd., 1979). Since then, an additional 12,984 m^3 (8,000,000 fbm) have been cut (Metis Development Branch statistics, 1981). Consequently the existing forest reserves on the Settlement are about 12,000,000 fbm. For the 1980-81 logging season the Metis Development Branch agreed to an 8115 m^3 (5,000,000 fbm) quota.

The future viability of forestry on Gift Lake depends upon the combination of small scale timber extraction and increased forest management. According to the Settlement Council, there are adequate reserves of timber left to operate a small sawmill for about five years if the timber is cut to 25.4 cm (10 in) stumps. This type of operation could be managed and operated by local residents, as there are five skidders, skidder operators, sawyers, mill workers, and machinery operators on the Settlement. An up-to-date timber inventory (including aspen and poplar) should be undertaken.

Council should adopt a policy of sustained yield and reforestation to maintain forest reserves over a long period of time. Allowable cuts by designated area must be established and adhered to. Reforestation on Gift Lake commenced in the summer of 1979. Seventy thousand white spruce were planted on a test site near Foster Lake (see Map 4.6). Funding for this project came partially from the Alberta Opportunity Corps. The other source was the Reforestation Fund in the Metis Settlement budget. The Reforestation Fund is kept separately by Settlement in the Metis Population Betterment Trust Fund. The Gift Lake accumulation in this fund for 1980 was $335,411. Additional reforestation should proceed.

Further potential for forestry exists on Gift Lake if the proposed flakeboard plant proceeds at Enilda, as it would create a market for poplar and aspen. According to the Settlement Council there is a potential 20 years of logging employment if the poplar and aspen could be marketed. In preparation for this it is recommended that a policy of sustained yield and reforestation also be considered for deciduous tree species. Future forestry studies on the Settlement should involve poplar and aspen as a potentially commercial forest resource.

Forestry development could be compatible with game ranching (Chapter 4.7). Clearings created by logging would promote the early, successional stages favoured by most species of ungulates. Cutting patterns and rotations could be programmed to improve habitat for moose, elk, deer, and buffalo (Lynch, 1981).

4.7 Wildlife Resources

4.7.1 Fish

Utikuma Lake (Big Whitefish) and the lakes of Gift Lake Settlement provide settlers with seasonal commercial fishing. Commercial fishing is an economic activity that fits in around other employment activities. The season usually lasts for 10 to 12 days and takes place in early March. Last year the settlers harvested approximately 136,080 kilograms (300,000 pounds) of fish, 68,040 kg (150,000 lb) of which were jackfish. The whitefish quota in 1981 was 136,080 kg 9300,000 lbs) on Utikuma. Gift Lake and Big Prairie Settlement share half of this quota. The other half goes to the Indians and other commercial fishermen. Perch, whitefish, tullibee and northern pike are the most important commercial fish species caught (Settlement Council, 1981). There have been no attempts made at fish planting on the Settlement.

Much of the commercial fishing by the residents takes place in Utikuma Lake in early March. Utikuma Lake has a mean depth of 2.74 m (9 ft) and a surface area of 275 square kilometres (106 square miles). The main fish species are lake whitefish, northern pike, yellow perch, ling, tullibee, and suckers. There is good access to the lake via Highway #750 through the Atikameg Indian Reserve although local fishermen would prefer to gain access from within the Settlement boundary, and have their own boat launch.

A report by Fish and Wildlife shows that growth rates in Utikuma Lake for whitefish and perch are average for the region. Northern pike and cisco grow faster in Utikuma Lake than the regional average. The lake has the capacity to produce 453,600 kg to 680,400 kg (1 to 1.5 million lb) of fish per year on a sustained yield (Alberta Fish and Wildlife, 1970). Utikuma Lake is a productive lake

with few limitations for commercial fishing. Council suggests having a spring season on rough fish (jackfish, ling, and suckers) to prevent them from eating the whitefish spawn.

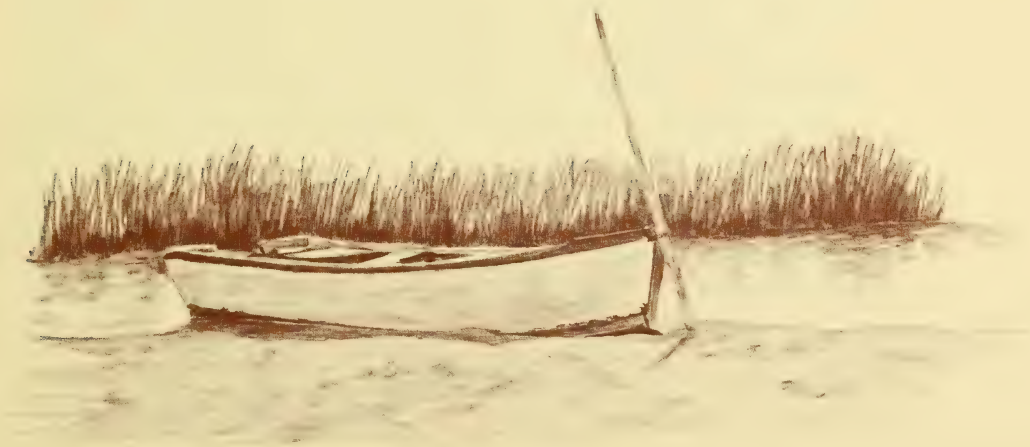
A commercial fish season also is held on Gift Lake, but is restricted to Settlement members. Gift Lake has a surface area of 712.3 ha (1760 ac) and a mean depth of 3.23 m (10.6 ft). The lake is quite alkaline and aquatic vegetation is abundant. Common lake species caught are tullibee, walleye, northern pike, perch and suckers. Fish caught in Gift Lake have commercial importance (Schroeder, 1979).

Two other lakes on the Settlement were mentioned by Council as being of commercial importance for fishing. Perch are reported to be plentiful in Long Lake (see Map 4.7) and jackfish on the lake 8 km (5 mi) west of Long Lake. Both may have commercial potential if stocked. Access to the latter can be gained after freeze-up.

Two steps towards strengthening the economic viability of commercial fishing would be to plant fish in the above mentioned lakes and to establish ice storage facilities on the shore of Utikuma Lake. Fish planting by Alberta Energy and Natural Resources would necessarily be preceded by legal, financial, and biological research into the feasibility of fish planting on the Settlement. As fish are planted for the use of all Albertans, the rights of non-settlement members would have to be clarified. Economic viability also would be taken into consideration. This would include factors such as local interest and potential markets. Thirdly, research would have to be carried out to determine the biological characteristics of Gift Lake and to determine the extent of winter kill.

Rainbow trout are the most commonly stocked species. However, out of their natural territory they can only be stocked in water bodies with no outlet or inlet. Due to winter kill they are usually restocked each year. Fish quality can be erratic from year to year and markets for rainbow trout are uncertain at this time. The Province is embarking on a pickerel enhancement program, but it is uncertain as to where the program will be implemented initially (McArthur, 1982).

At present the fish caught are hauled by truck to Joussard. The plant in Joussard is reported to be too small to handle the volumes delivered. Perhaps the surplus volumes could be delivered to the packers at Faust. The possibility of establishing an ice storage shed on the Settlement should be considered. Refrigeration trailers could also be temporarily located at the lake shore during the fishing season (McArthur, 1981).



4.7.2 Unglates and Waterfowl

Hunting and trapping on Gift Lake is carried out mainly for domestic purposes. Fur bearing animals and waterfowl are decreasing in importance as sources of food and money.

Fur bearing animals are common on the Settlement. According to C.L.I., most of the land area has only moderate limitations (class 4) for the support of ungulates (deer, moose, and elk). Poor soil moisture, lack of soil nutrients and adverse soil characteristics are the common physical restrictions. Moose, caribou, and deer can be found throughout most of the Settlement. Moose is reported to be very common and supplies an important supplement to local diets. Several residents are also involved in trapping.

One way to intensify the production of ungulates species would be to initiate game ranching. This concept involves the management of mixed ungulates (usually moose, elk, deer, and buffalo or bison) within an area enclosed by a game proof fence. Game ranching could provide employment, subsistence meat, materials for crafts, bison for meat sales, and elk for sale to game farms as breeding stock. Game ranching could be economically and culturally feasible. The capital costs of establishing such an operation are not excessive. It would be energy efficient and inexpensive to maintain. Market conditions are currently favourable for the sale of "specialty red meat". Because the Settlement contains large tracts of marginal agricultural land suitable for raising ungulates, game ranching would also make efficient use of the land. A limitation to game ranching, however, is the current absence of agricultural programs to provide technical advice and low interest loans (Lynch, 1981).


GIFT LAKE METI
Wildlife Capal
Land Capability F
Very High Ca
Higher Capal
Moderate Ca
Lower Capab
(Little Long Lake)
(Long Lake)
Hawkins Lake
(Gift Creek)
Utikumasis (Little Whitefish) Lake
Utikoomac Indian Reserve
Utikuma River
Utikuma (Big
Gift Lake
HAMLET
(Shortcut Creek)
Little Horse Lake
Little Horse Creek
(Shortcut Lake)
Pentland (Pelican) Lake
Foster Creek
Foster Lake
1 mile 16 km
Source:
Adapted f
C.L.I. Land
Wildlife –
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12
81
80
79
78

Map 4.7

ıETIS SETTLEMENT
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Capability

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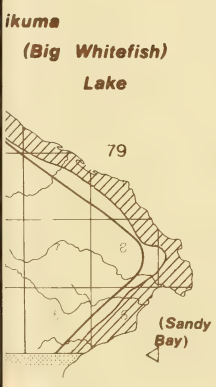

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A pilot project involving the raising of buffalo has been established at Kikino Metis Settlement under the management of the Kikino Wildlife Ranching Association. The results of this project should be monitored to assess its applicability for Gift Lake Settlement.

The waterfowl capability is based on Canada Land Inventory ratings for the purposes of this report. The C.L.I. classes are simplified into the categories of: very high capability (C.L.I. class 2); higher capability (C.L.I. class 3); moderate capability (C.L.I. class 4); and lower capability (C.L.I. classes 5 and 6). Map 4.7 illustrates the locations of the different capability categories.

Generally the capability for waterfowl in the Settlement lakes and shores is very high. The edge of Utikuma Lake (Big Whitefish Lake) serves as an important migration stop for waterfowl and the centre of the lake is an important wintering area (see Map 4.7). From the standpoint of waterfowl conservation, the lake is critical by offering a combination of protective cover and space necessary for molting, production, and staging.

Gift Lake, Utikumasis Lake (Little Whitefish Lake), and two areas to the north of the Settlement have a high capability for waterfowl production. A limiting factor, however, is that there are insufficient nutrients in the lake and along the lake edge. These areas are also important staging and production grounds for waterfowl.

Areas classified as having a moderate capability for waterfowl (see Map 4.7) are generally lacking in sufficient food nutrients and lack an expanded marsh edge. The densities of waterfowl in these areas are considerably less than the higher classification zones. Little Horse Lake is an example of this type of area.

5.0 Human Resources

This chapter examines the administration, population, employment and community participation on Gift Lake Settlement. In many respects the characteristics or elements of culture and day-to-day living on Gift Lake are common to all eight Metis Settlements. Ghostkeeper (1981) describes Settlement lifestyle as follows:

> "The culture and lifestyle of native people is one which is closely linked with the environment. Many native families obtain a significant portion of their food from the land. Fishing, hunting, and the collection of naturally occuring fruits and gardening is a common practice on the Metis Settlements. The use of these foods allows many families to eat well on a relatively small annual income. Many families have a small income because of the lack of full-time employment opportunities. However with seasonal employment, trapping and in some cases farming, many families are able to make a good living. An outside observer may consider our communities to be poor. Financial poverty, however, should not lead one to conclude that these communities are socially, psychologically or culturally poor. Money and material possessions are not highly valued in our culture, rather our way of life places a strong emphasis on family unity and daily living".

5.1 Administration

When the Metis Betterment Act was passed in November, 1938, the interests of the Gift Lake Settlement were largely in the hands of the Provincial Government. The Metis Rehabilitation Branch was the government agency set up to administer the day to day functions of the Settlement. Much of the local control and budgeting was handled by the area supervisor. Upon advice from the Council, the supervisor recommended services and regulations to the Branch. The Branch had authority over roads, agricultural and timber controls, housing, power lines, and schools.

Today's Council, consisting of five locally elected residents, meets regularly to discuss Settlement needs, decide on membership applications and allocation, submit development proposals, and make budget expenditure recommendations. Council is assisted by the area manager, foreman and the clerk. The Metis Development Branch, now under the Department of Municipal Affairs, also has an area supervisor in High Prairie to assist the four western Settlement Councils. Authority over roads, education, housing, and utilities has been largely handed over to the respective government departments and agencies.

Finances for operational items are obtained from three sources:

1) Provincial appropriations (Settlement vote budget);
2) Metis Population Betterment Trust Fund which includes annual revenues from oil surface leases, right of entry compensation (seismograph work), cattle sales where applicable, interest on the Trust Fund, land levies, and miscellaneous such as sale of gravel; and
3) Municipal Debt Reduction money.

Revenue for capital items is obtained from:

1) Municipal Debt Reduction money (held in the Metis Settlement Trust Fund);
2) Municipal Debt Reduction interest; and
3) Provincial appropriations (vote budget) from general revenue.

While the Metis Development Branch still administers the dispensation of these monies, the Council now is responsible for submitting the annual budget recommending how funds will be spent. The Branch is increasingly moving toward decentralizing administration to the Settlement Councils and their staff. Council is actively involved in development planning (e.g., housing, rodeo grounds construction, road location) and efforts to create employment (e.g., attempts to re-establish a sawmill) on the Settlement.

5.2 Population

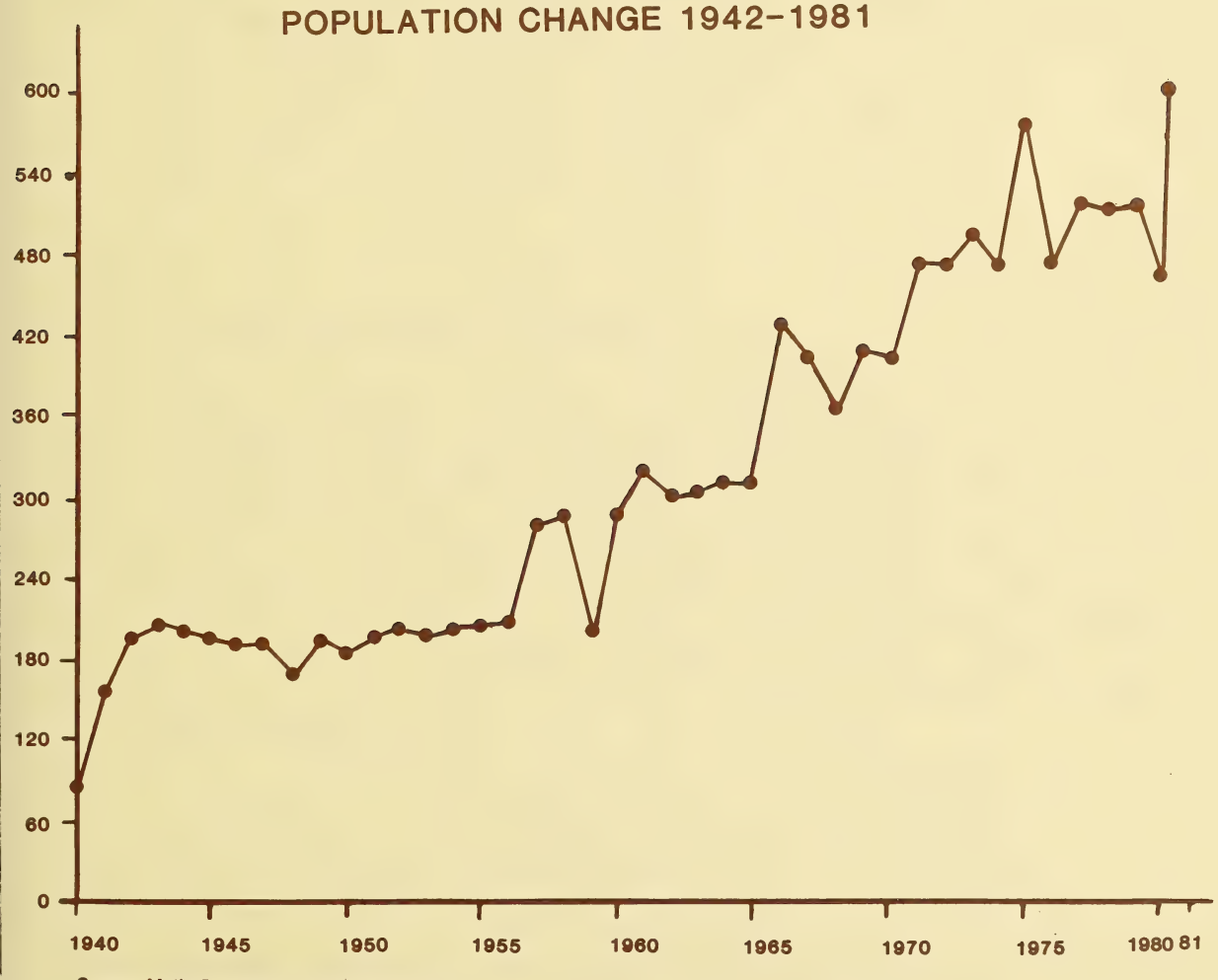
The 1981 Metis Development Branch census undertaken by the Council indicates a population of 604, whereas a 1980 Metis Development Branch census indicated a permanent population of 461. Part of the increase may have been due to a difference in survey methodology. The 1980 census counted only those residents regularly residing on the Settlement at the time of survey, whereas the 1981 census included persons still registered as Settlement residents, but were temporarily off-Settlement for various reasons. Historically families and individuals have periodically moved on and off the Settlement due to employment, housing, school, and training opportunities or personal situations. Of all the settlers living on the eight Metis Settlements, about 16% reside on Gift Lake Settlement.

5.2.1 Population Trends

According to the Metis Development Branch census figures, the population on Gift Lake fluctuated from year to year throughout the 1970's, but the net population from 1970 to 1980 has remained fairly stable. For instance from 1974 to 1975 the number of residents increased by 103 persons. From 1975 to 1976 the population dropped by 100 persons. These changes are primarily due to in-migration and out-migrations. Even with such yearly fluctuation the 1970's saw only a modest net growth of 55 persons on the Settlement. This indicates a trend of overall stability in total population. Supporting this is that population from 1960 to 1970 only increased by 125 persons. A sharp increase occured in 1981, but as previously mentioned, this may have been in part due to different survey procedures.

Population change on Gift Lake is largely due to in-migration, although natural population growth is also a factor. The historical populations for Gift Lake are illustrated by Table 5.1.

TABLE 5.1
POPULATION CHANGE 1942-1981



Source: Metis Development Branch, 1981

In addition to the recent fluctuations in population numbers, important changes are taking place within the age and family structures. Such influences are significant as they indicate future population totals and structure.

The first important trend is that Gift Lake is moving towards an older population. In 1970 the child population (including pre-school and in-school children) comprised 78.5% of the total population. By 1981 this figure had dropped to 38.4%, while the adult portion of the total population rose from 34.2% in 1970 to 61.6% in 1981. Compared to the ratio of adults in northern Alberta this figure is low, but the trends on Gift Lake point to a movement towards provincial averages. These ratios in 1970, 1975 and 1979 are shown for Gift Lake on Table 5.2.

5.2 POPULATION PROFILE

AGE GROUP	1970	1975	1980	1981
Pre-school children	124▲ 30.5%△	88 15.4 %	59 12.8%	37
In-school children	143 35.2%	179 31.2%	159 34.5%	195 32.3%
Adults	139 34.2 %	306 53.4 %	243 52.7%	372 61.6%
Persons per family unit	6.0	7.4	6.3 (1979)	

▲Absolute △Percent of total settlement population

Source: Metis Development Branch

The number of pre-school children on Gift Lake Settlement actually dropped by 87 during the 1970's. In 1970 there were 124 pre-school children and in 1981 there were only 37. The number of in-school children rose by only 52 during the same time period. Conversely the adult population rose by 233 from 139 in 1970 to 372 in 1981.

The aging population structure is largely a result of a decrease in persons per family unit. As families choose to have fewer children over time, family size drops. In 1975 there was an average of 7.4 persons per family unit. By 1979 the average family size had dropped to 6.3, and by 1981 it had declined to 5.3. These figures are considerably higher than the 1976 average for northern Alberta of 3.8 (Northern Alberta Development Council, 1980), but they indicate a movement towards the norm for northern Alberta.

With the trend towards fewer children per family, the influence that maintains the overall population level is net migration. Off-settlement residents returning to live on Gift Lake along with new members to the Settlement compensate for lower rates of natural population increase. In 1977 there were 23 persons of residence status living off the Settlement. As some of these persons choose to return to Gift Lake and as new members arrived to take up residency, the population has remained at relatively stable levels.

5.2.2 Implications of Trends

Due to the growth rates of the past twenty years, and the population increases during the past decade, it is expected that future population growth will be moderate. Considerable fluctuations are likely to occur as families move on and off the Settlement.

In-migration as opposed to natural population increase will be a more important factor in influencing population change on Gift Lake. Several external factors could stimulate the rate of in-migration. High farmland costs, housing costs, and interest rates off-Settlement could encourage Metis to move to Gift Lake. Creation of additional on-Settlement or nearby off-Settlement jobs (e.g., the proposed Enilda flakeboard plant), or resolution of the legal issue of subsurface rights ownership in favour of the Settlements would likely increase in-migration.

The population structure will mature as people choose to have fewer children and as adults from outside the Settlement arrive to take up residency. Therefore the nature of community development and social service programs should change to suit a more mature population.

5.3 Employment

Employment on Gift Lake is generally divided between full time work for government agencies and seasonal or occasional work in the private sector. Fifteen people on the Settlement are employed on a full time basis for government. Two are employed by the Metis Development Branch and two work for the School Lunch Program. One person operates the forestry lookout tower, another is a grader operator for Northlands School Division, and six students obtain part time work under summer employment programs (see Table 5.3). Employment in the public sector is relatively stable as the jobs now offered are well established and serve a yearround community service. Increased activity in forest management or road building could create more local government employment. Fire fighting employs up to 100 residents on a seasonal basis.

Most residents on Gift Lake find employment in the private sector (see Table 5.3). Except for one full time farmer, all of these residents are employed on a temporary basis. This involves seasonal employment such as commercial fishing and and other occasional work that provides an income. Gift Lake has 15 commercial fishing outfits, each having a four man crew. The commercial fishing season takes place in early March and lasts for 10 to 12 days. There are five skidder logging contractors who hire from three to four workers each. This employment takes place during winter. Seismic line cutting, brushing and cleaning can temporarily employ up to six people. From nine to 12 residents find occasional work in the trades of welding, carpentry and mechanics.

Because most work skills in Gift Lake are related to temporary or seasonal work in the private sector, additional training and job creation efforts should be considered. More full time employment opportunities are required and part-time employment which would dovetail with existing seasonal employment. Establishment of a chip or flakeboard plant in the region

5.3 EMPLOYMENT BASE

Type of Employment	GOV'T.		Private Sector On Stmt.		Private Sector Off Stmt.	
	P	T	P	T	P	T
METIS DEVELOPMENT BRANCH						
a) Clerical	1					
b) Project Supervisor	1					
SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM	3					
FORESTRY						
a) Contract	1	1		15		1
b) Mill Work						1
TRANSPORTATION	1					
FUNDED STUDENT WORK		6				
FARMING				3		
COMMERCIAL FISHING				50		
FIRE FIGHTING		100				6
OIL & GAS INDUSTRY						
SEISMIC LINE CUTTING, BRUSHING, & CLEARING				6		3
HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATORS				5		1
TRADES:						
a) Welder				3-4		
b) Electrician						
c) Carpenter				9		
d) Mechanic				3-4		
e) Plumber						
f) Other						1
TRAPPING						
NORTHLAND SCHOOL DIVISION						
a) Education	8					
b) Clerical	1					
c) Maintenance	3					

P: Permanent

T: Temporary

* Regard overlap between temporary jobs.

Source: Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council 1981

would provide a market for poplar and aspen, thereby generating many years of employment in contract logging. Expansion and intensification of agricultural activities such as cow/calf operations or game ranching could also provide extra revenue, employment and food sources. Council has also considered a recreation or fishing lodge type development at Sandy Bay beach on Utikuma Lake (see Map 6.1), which could create seasonal jobs.

5.4 Community Participation

Formal social activities are important to the community of Gift Lake Settlement. Buildings available for social gatherings are the two churches, the school, the Gift Lake Community Vocational Centre (C.V.C.) and the community hall. Along with providing religious services, the churches serve as meeting places for organized groups such as young peoples' drop-ins. The school building is often used for special occasions such as weddings and dances. The C.V.C. is used for adult education upgrading classes. From September 1979 to June 1980, 28 students attended the centre. Courses offered at Gift Lake C.V.C. include such subjects as mathematics, science, general sociology, health and personal development, and typing. The community hall is being used temporarily to house the School Lunch Program and at present is unavailable for social gatherings.

Outdoor activities include tournaments at the ball park and athletics such as track events and skating on the school grounds. New rodeo grounds east of the hamlet were constructed for the 1981 rodeo season. (See Map 6.1)

6.0 Housing and Infrastructure

6.1 Housing

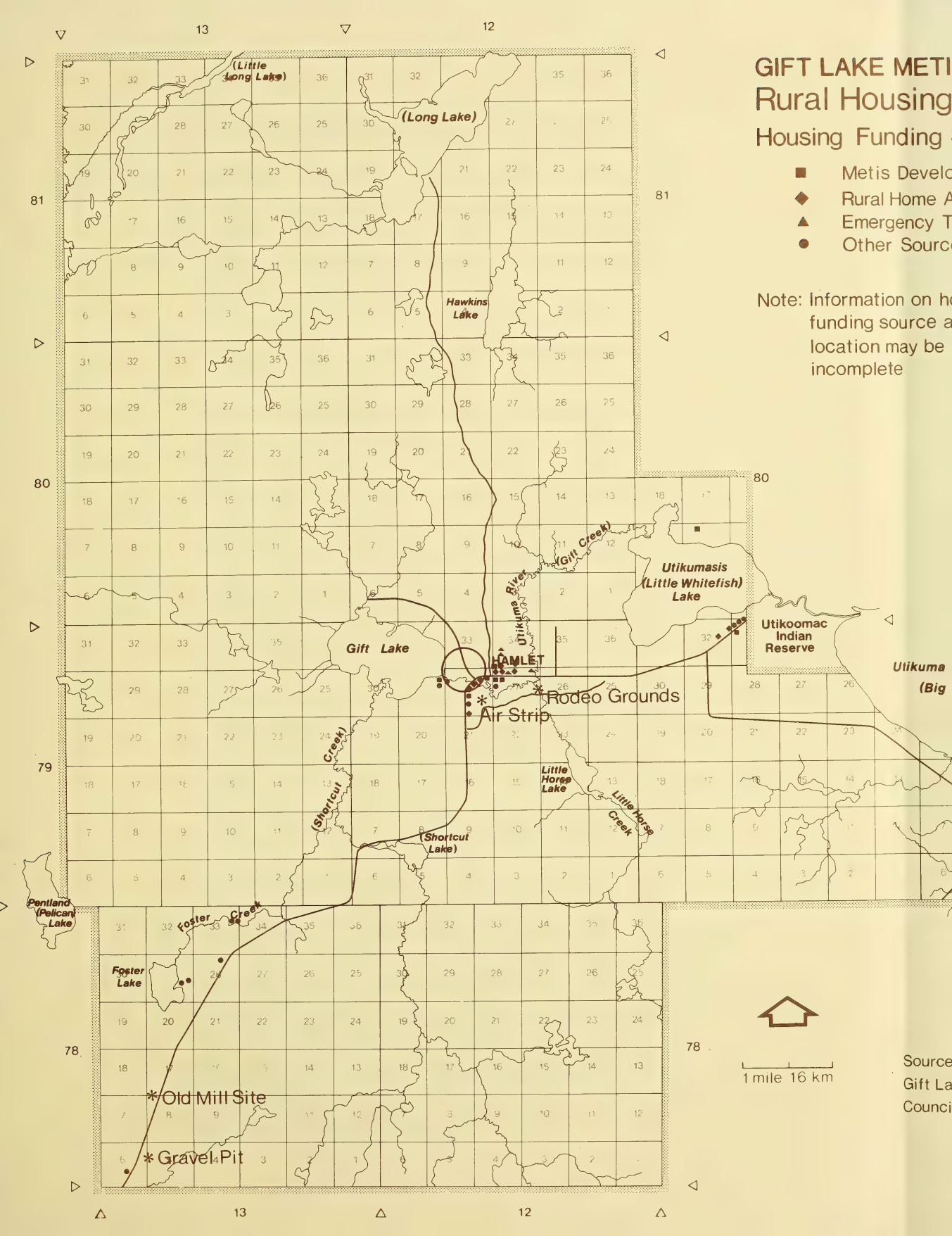
Housing conditions of Gift Lake improved significantly throughout the 1970's. Both housing stock and housing utilities were bettered through local initiative and various housing programs. The number of homes supplied with electrical power has risen. Today all homes have access to this service. Rural housing locations are shown on Map 6.1. Hamlet housing is shown on Map 7.1. It should be noted that the number, funding source, and map location of residences may not be exact. This is due to several factors including the transient nature of trailers, changes in occupancy rates, and subjectivity as to whether or not a house is habitable.

6.1.1 Housing Programs

Gift Lake has been active in several housing programs. The four most significant of the past and present programs are mentioned below.

6.1.1.1 Metis Development Branch Housing (MDB)

Until 1977 most of the responsibility for housing rested with the Metis Development Branch. From 1962/63 to 1977, 467 housing units were provided to the eight Metis Settlements at a total cost of $1,646,900. This housing program is estimated to have provided over 80% of the housing stock from 1962 to 1977 (Alberta Housing and Public Works, 1977). At present the majority of occupied homes on the Settlement originated from this source. Most of these homes have inadequate foundations and are subject to rotting and sinking.


GIFT LAKE METI
Rural Housing
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Rural Home A
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Other Source
Note: Information on ho
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(Little Long Lake)
(Long Lake)
Hawkins Lake
Gift Lake
(Gift Creek)
Utikumasis (Little Whitefish) Lake
Utikoomac Indian Reserve
Utikuma River
HAMLET
Rodeo Grounds
Air Strip
Creek)
(Shortcut
(Shortcut Lake)
Little Horse Lake
Little Horse Creek
Pentland (Pelican) Lake
Foster Creek
Foster Lake
Old Mill Site
Gravel Pit
1 mile 16 km
Source
Gift La
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Map 6.1

METIS SETTLEMENT
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Development Branch
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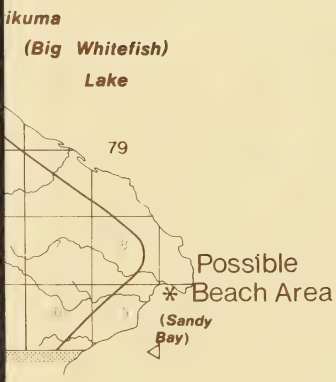


Source:
Gift Lake Metis Settlement
Council, 1981

6.1.1.2 Emergency Trailer Program (ETP)

This program is delivered by Alberta Housing Corporation in conjunction with the Metis Association of Alberta. Up to 1977, Gift Lake received 4.3% of ETP approvals on the eight Metis Settlements (Alberta Housing and Public Works, 1977).

6.1.1.3 Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)

RRAP is a federal program administered by Alberta Native Development Corporation for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Grants and loans are provided to settlers interested in comprehensive home repairs. Approximately 16% of the total RRAP approvals on the eight Settlements have gone to Gift Lake (Alberta Housing and Public Works, 1977). Repair has been the major alternative on Gift Lake when replacement of housing has not been available. Substantial repairs have included work on foundations, heating systems, and house additions. Up to 1977, 28 RRAP approvals had been granted to Gift Lake for a financial support total of $126,000 (Alberta Housing and Public Works, 1977).

Two other programs of lesser financial impact are the Emergency Repair Program (ERP) and the Senior Citizen Home Improvement Program (SCHIP). ERP is administered by the Metis Association of Alberta under CMHC. It is intended to grant building materials to families who desire to upgrade their homes. Gift Lake has had 43 approvals under the ERP at a total financial support cost of $34,400. SCHIP is designed to assist senior citizens in repairing or improving their homes. Twenty approvals have been made under this program in which up to $1,000 is available to each applicant.

6.1.1.4 Rural Home Assistance Program (RHAP)

Since 1977 the Rural Home Assistance Program (RHAP) has become the most important new housing source on Gift Lake. Cost shared by Alberta Housing and Public Works and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, RHAP is designed to help families and communities build their own new homes. As required by the program, Gift Lake has established a non-profit housing association to administer the local housing program. The Association acts as a co-ordinator in setting up and running the program. It sets housing priorities based on the needs of the applicants and co-ordinates the housing project through to completion. The Association also acts as a liaison between local residents and Alberta Housing and Public Works. In the past five years 24 new homes have been constructed by local residents under RHAP. This represents a grant of $18,000 per unit (1981 rate) for construction materials. At least four homes are available per year. More home grants may be obtained for in any given year, if the first four are successfully completed during the prescribed time period.

6.1.2 Present Housing Situation

Table 6.1 outlines the housing stock on Gift Lake by funding source. There are 120 dwellings (including trailers). The RHAP homes presently consist of 20% of the total housing stock. MDB homes consist of 51.7% of the homes and ETP trailers make up 8.3%. Gift Lake has the most crowded housing conditions of all the Metis Settlements. The housing stock is generally that of older, smaller homes (Alberta Housing and Public Works, 1977). According to the Settlement Council there is currently a housing shortage on Gift Lake. The shortage of good housing could be a limiting factor to population growth on Gift Lake Settlement.

6.1 HOUSING STOCK

HOUSING TYPE	#	%
RHAP	24	20.0
MDB	62	51.7
ETP	10	8.3
Other	24	20.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council 1981

6.1.3 Future Housing Needs

The 24 RHAP homes are all in good condition and have set a precedent for desired housing quality on the Settlement. Most of the other houses however are older MDB structures, many of which require repair or replacement. Problems exist with the foundations, walls, and roofs of some of the older MDB funded homes.

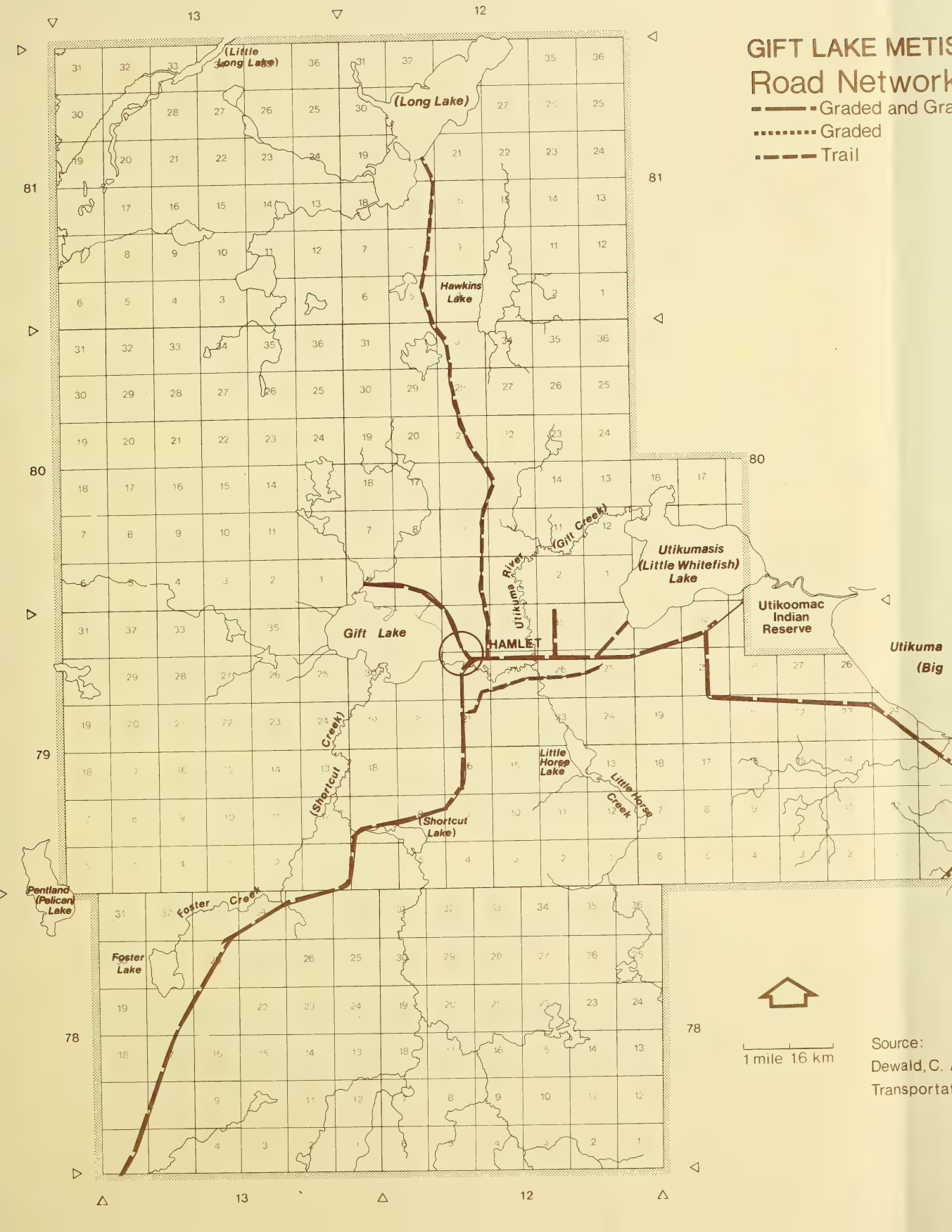
To accelerate the process of housing provision and renewal several actions could be taken. The number of homes constructed under the RHAP program could be increased by constructing more quickly the initial annual allocation of four to qualify for additional housing allocations. Some of the houses suitable for renewal could be repaired utilizing funds from RRAP. Emergency trailers from Alberta Housing Corporation provide another low-cost alternate to dealing with the housing shortage problem. Settlers could also be encouraged to build their own new homes, using low interest mortgage programs available to Albertans.

6.2 Infrastructure Services

Infrastructure services on Gift Lake include: domestic water supply, transportation, electricity, waste disposal, communications, health services, education, recreation, police protection, and government offices.

As previously discussed in Section 4.4, the source of domestic water supply is Gift Lake. Although there is no residential distribution system, filtered and chlorinated water is available from a central water point, two water stand points. Several of the community facilities are also hooked up to the water line. Aside from the sewage collection system for the community facilities (school, community hall, teacherages) there is no communal sewage system. Two of the teacherages have septic tanks and leaching pits. Otherwise disposal is generally through pit privies or outhouses.

Regarding transportation, the Settlement has a secondary highway, local roads, and a grass airstrip (nearest paved and lighted airstrip is High Prairie). The road network is shown on Map 6.2. The Settlement is also serviced daily by transport truck. The main access is by Secondary #750, a gravel highway. It links the Settlement with Highway #2 to the southeast and Highway #67 to the northeast. There are also several local roads. One extends from the highway to the southwest corner of Utikumasis Lake and is graded and gravelled. Alberta Transportation has also extended a graded road into the new residential subdivision 1.6 km (1 mi) east of the hamlet. Another local road runs from Highway #750 to near Utikuma Lake. The north half is graded and gravelled and provides access to Utikuma Lake (via cutline) and areas which may have agricultural potential. The lower half of this road is maintained by Hudsons Bay Oil and Gas and is only graded.


GIFT LAKE METIS
Road Network
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(Little Long Lake)
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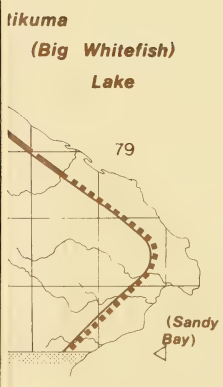
(Gift Creek)
Utikumasis (Little Whitefish) Lake
Utikoomac Indian Reserve
Utikuma (Big
Utikuma River
Gift Lake
HAMLET
(Shortcut Creek)
Little Horse Lake
Little Horse Creek
(Shortcut Lake)
Pentland (Pelican) Lake
Foster Creek
Foster Lake
1 mile 1.6 km
Source:
Dewald, C.
Transportat

Map 6.2

METIS SETTLEMENT

work

and Graveled



ce:

ald, C. Alberta

sportation, 1981

The other local road runs parallel with Highway #750 north of Little Horse Lake, and provides access to the airport and farmland. It is not maintained. Council has suggested a new bridge be built over Little Horse Creek. In 1981 Alberta Transportation improved the hamlet roads and constructed about 4.8 km (3 mi) of new road from the hamlet around the north side of Gift Lake to open up the area for residences and grazing. Council also would like a 2.4 km (1.5 mi) road built from Sandy Bay on Utikuma Lake to the southeastern road. This would provide access to a proposed recreation site and the boat launching site.

With regard to utilities, electricity is available to all established settlers. Homes are heated with propane, oil and wood. Garbage is collected weekly and disposed of in a modified landfill.

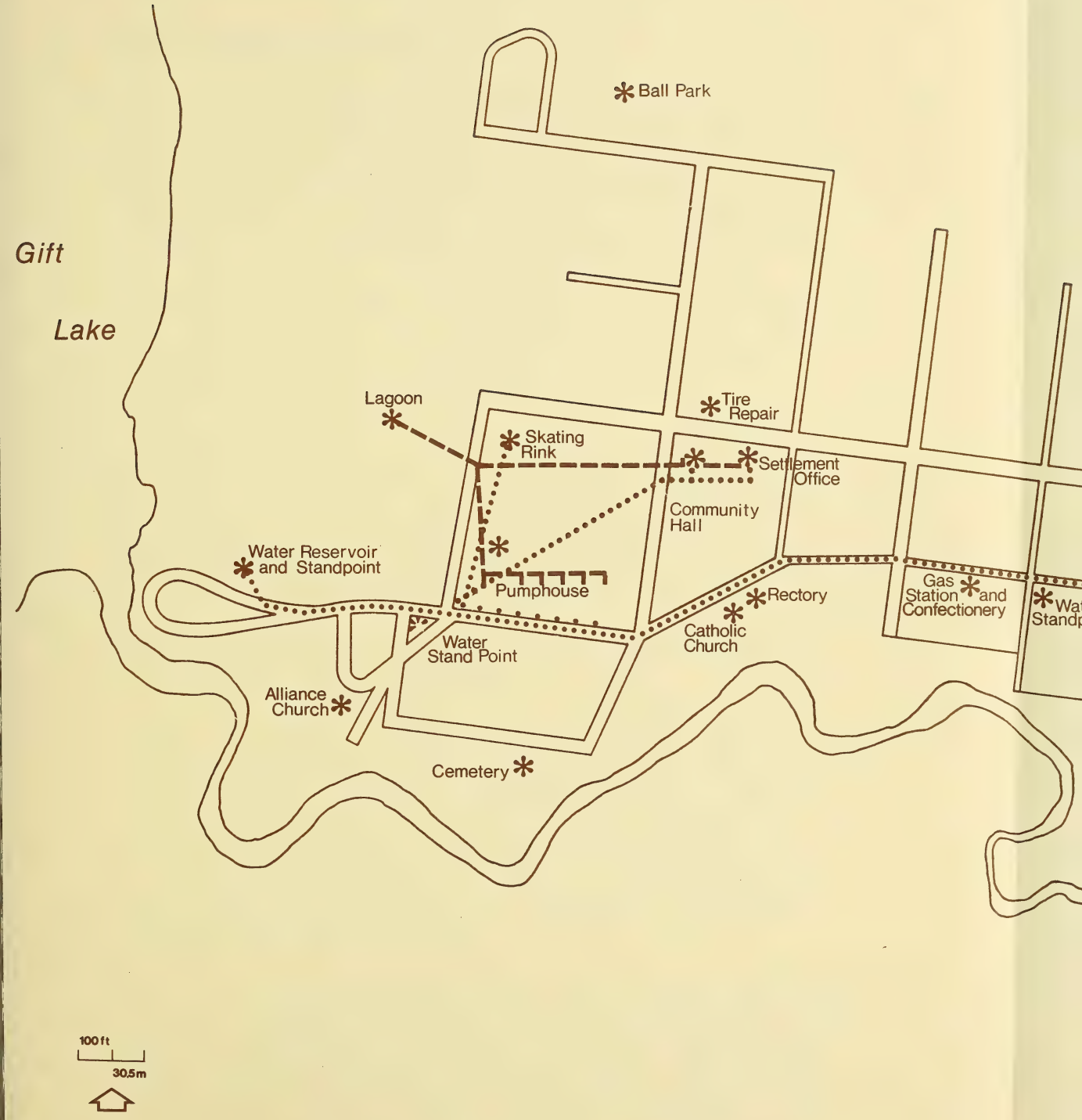
Communications include telephone, radio, and television. Both private and party telephone lines are available. Two television stations, CBC and CFRN are received. Although the nearest weekly newspaper is published in High Prairie, the Settlement Office does circulate a newsletter periodically.

The nearest hospital, medical services, and ambulance are available in High Prairie. A public health nurse visits Gift Lake regularly.

Grades K through 9 attend school in the hamlet. High school students attend in High Prairie. A small Community Vocational Centre (C.V.C.) also operates in the hamlet.

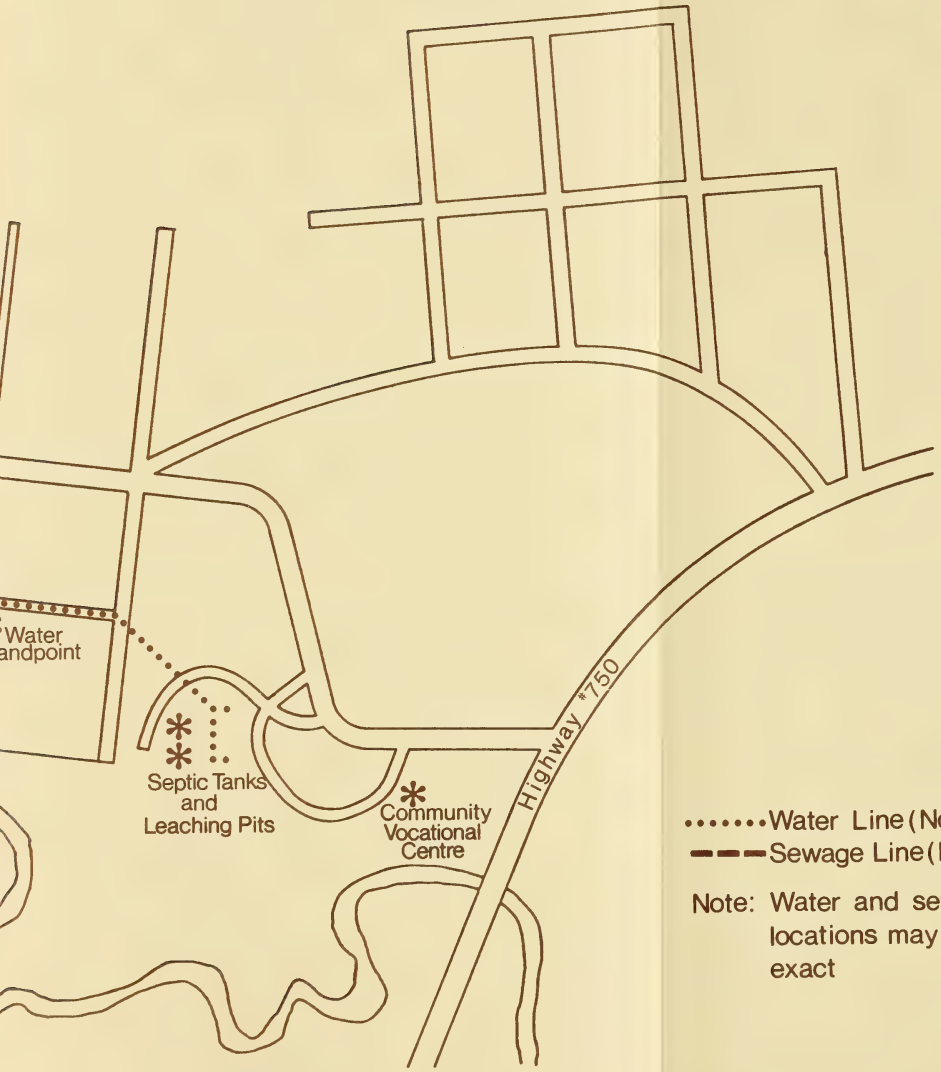
Hamlet recreation facilities include a ball diamond, community hall, recreation centre, gym, and skating rink. The Settlement recently constructed a large rodeo facility east of the hamlet.

Gift Lake is policed by High Prairie R.C.M.P. There is no resident fire brigade. The only government office is Settlement Administration Office. Two churches in the hamlet serve the community. Most of the above facilities are shown on Map 6.3.


Gift
Lake
Ball Park
Lagoon
Tire Repair
Skating Rink
Settlement Office
Community Hall
Water Reservoir and Standpoint
Pumphouse
Rectory
Gas Station and Confectionery
Catholic Church
Water Stand Point
Alliance Church
Cemetery
100 ft
30.5 m

Map 6.3

Gift Lake Metis Settlement Community Facilities



.....Water Line (Northlands)
— — —Sewage Line (Northlands)

Note: Water and sewage line locations may not be exact

Source:
Gift Lake Metis Settlement Council, 1981

7.0 Settlement Hamlet

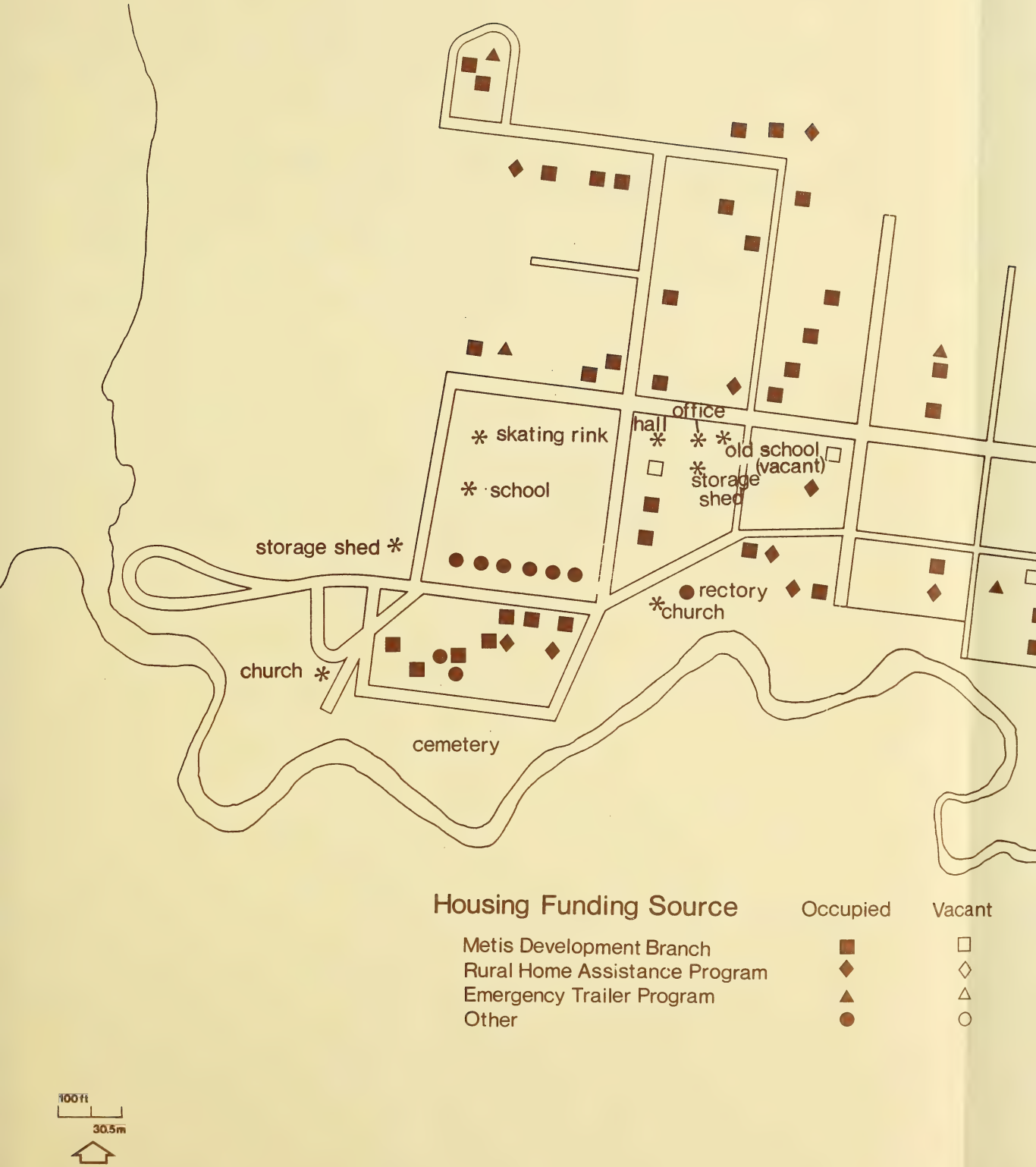
In comparison with other Metis Settlements, Gift Lake's population is concentrated in the hamlet. It should be noted that the hamlet currently has no designated boundaries. The area shown on Map 7.1 simply represents the largest aggregation of housing units around the hamlet centre. About 68% of the dwellings are located in the hamlet, which covers an area of about 46 hectares (15 acres). Although most of this area has been allocated, there are 17 vacant lots covering 13 ha (32 ac). The hamlet has about 60 lots, most of which are 36.6 m by 91.4 m (120 ft by 300 ft) in size. Map 7.1 shows the hamlet housing location and layout.

As mentioned previously, only the Office, community hall, school and teacherages are connected to the water supply system and sewage lagoon. It should be determined if the water supply line and sewage lagoon system has surplus capacity, as additional community facilities or residences could possibly be hooked up to it.

There are 82 homes in the hamlet. Although 5 houses are vacant, most of these are in poor condition.

Potential for gaining more residences in the hamlet exists if the vacant land becomes available. If development were to take place on all vacant lots, at least 17 additional homes could be built. This would assist in reducing the housing shortage on Gift Lake. Filling and drainage work would be required to prepare some of the lowlying vacant land for development. Replotting to smaller lot size would also generate more lots.

Even if vacant homes were occupied and vacant lots developed, there would still appear to be a shortage of lots on the Settlement. Two areas of expansion have been suggested by Council. The first area is 1.6 km (1 mi) east of the hamlet and presently contains 10 lots (nine of which are vacant). The second area is northwest of the hamlet along the shore of Gift Lake. Council is interested in subdividing 1.2 to 4 ha (3 to 10 ac) lots in this area. Both of


skating rink
school
office
hall
old school
(vacant)
storage
shed
storage shed
rectory
church
church
cemetery
Housing Funding Source
Occupied
Vacant
Metis Development Branch
Rural Home Assistance Program
Emergency Trailer Program
Other
100 ft
30.5 m

Gift Lake Metis Settlement

Hamlet Housing

Map 7.1

nt

Source:
Gift Lake Metis Settlement
Council, 1981

these areas appear to have potential for development. Prior to development proper site planning and a legal surveying is recommended. In both cases higher densities of residences is recommended.

It should be noted that decentralizing new lots to rural areas could diminish the future feasibility of a communal water and sewer system in the hamlet. On the other hand, if the existing vacant lots and the lots with substandard housing were replotted to create smaller lots, the feasibility of obtaining a communal water and sewer system for all residences would be increased.

Commercial establishments on Gift Lake are limited to two gas sales outlets a confectionery, and one or two tire repair outlets. The operator of the gas outlet near Utikuma Lake may develop it into a service station. There may be potential for a service station/grocery store if it were located on Secondary Highway #750 where it could serve both the travelling public and Settlement residents.

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